

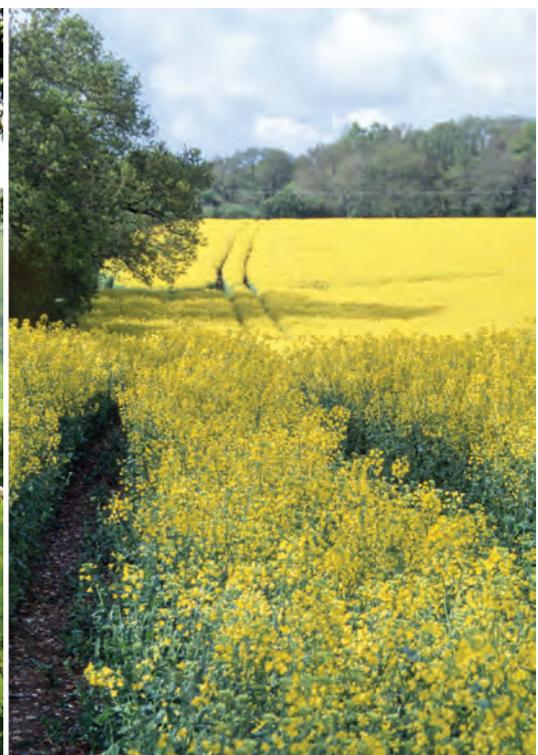


Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Historic Environment Action Plans

Area 10: Wooded Chalk
Downland of the Cranborne
Chase and Chetterwood





This document forms part of a suite of documents which together comprise the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Historic Environment Action Plans.

The HEAPs provide a summary of the key characteristics of the historic environment of the AONB at a landscape scale, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of this special landscape and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance these special characteristics. These summaries are divided into two groups:

1. Summaries of the historic environment of the AONB by area
2. Summaries of the historic environment of the AONB by theme

These core documents are accompanied by documents which provide background information, supplementary information and detail on the methodologies used to create these documents.

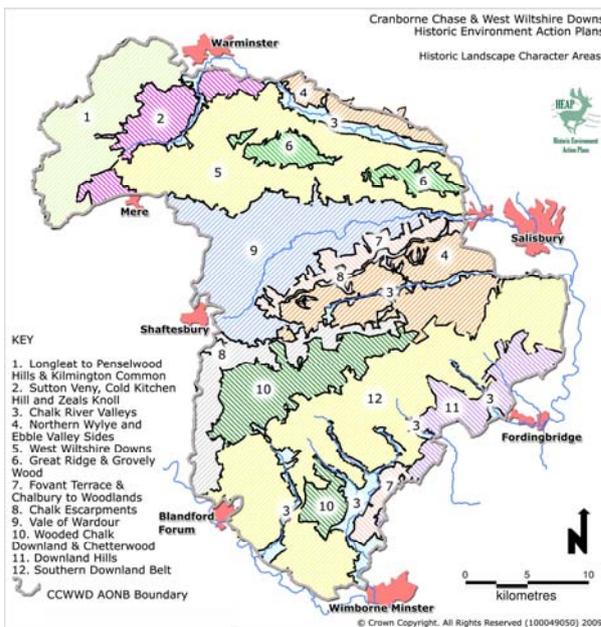
A series of icons help you navigate this suite of documents:

-  **Background** - Provides an introduction to the AONB Historic Environment Action Plans and provides background information on the history and archaeology of the landscape **(B1 to B10)**
-  **Area** - Summarises key characteristics of discrete geographical areas within the AONB, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of each area and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance its characteristics **(A1 to A12)**
-  **Theme** - Summarises key characteristics of historic environment themes, each document then sets out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of each theme and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance its characteristics **(T1 to T14)**
-  **Supplementary** - A series of documents which explore supplementary issues of relevance to the Historic Environment Action Plans **(S1 to S2)**
-  **Method** - Introduces the methodology behind the production of the Historic Environment Action Plans **(M1 to M3)**

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Introducing the Historic Landscape Character Areas



Twelve distinct Historic Landscape Character Areas have been identified in the AONB. The attributes used to identify the Historic Landscape Character Areas was based on information in the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation. The HLC provided two key pieces of information:

1. The present day historic landscape character present in the AONB.
2. The surviving evidence of the historical development of the area.

The following descriptions aim to provide an overview of each area

which encapsulates the main features of the Historic Environment present and include both the archaeological and historical, the very old and the more recent.



The process through which the Historic Landscape Character Areas were identified, and mapped, and the sources of information used to create these descriptions is documented in the methodological statement 'Creating and Describing Historic Character Areas'.

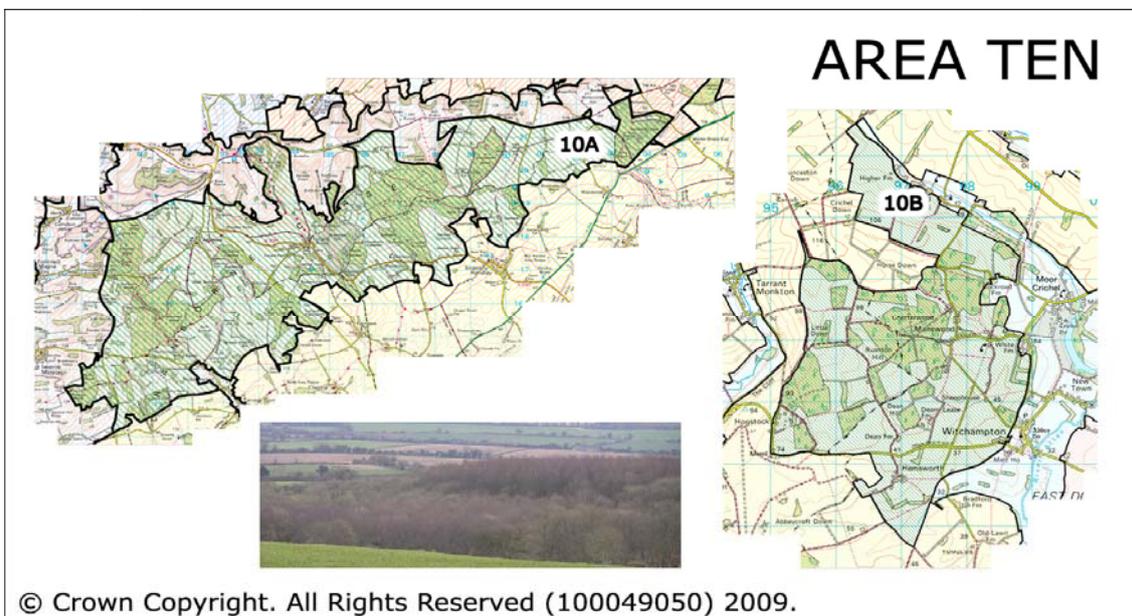
Location, Geology, Land Use and Topography

There are two areas which all form the wooded chalk downland of the Cranborne Chase and Chatterwood

Area 10A is centred on Tollard Royal. The Chalk escarpment forms the northern boundary (see Area 8), the Melbury to Blandford Chalk escarpment the western boundary (see Area 8) and the Southern Downland Belt (see Area 4B) the southern boundary. The geology is predominantly chalk. The area comprises a mixture of dramatic chalk valleys, ridges and plateaux with diverse woodland copses, shelterbelts and trees, with the landform rising to the north.

Area 10B Chetterwood is located near to Witchampton to the west of the Allen Valley (see Area 3) and bounded by the open southern downland belt to the west and south (see Area 12). The area is predominantly wooded interspersed with irregular arable fields. The underlying geology is chalk and the woodland areas are associated with overlying clay with flints.

Location Map



Summary

Summary of Key Characteristics

- *The Cranborne Chase wooded chalk downland forms the inner boundary of the Cranborne Chase hunting area, which was divided into a series of walks. Chetterwood is an outlying 'walk'. There is a strong discernable landscape legacy from this history*
- *Both areas have veteran woodland at their core and are associated with ancient assarts and enclosures.*
- *Roman roads cross both areas, and there is an ancient network of historic routeways.*
- *There are remnants of open downland in the north of area 10A.*
- *The ancient shire boundary (Wiltshire and Dorset) crosses Area 10A*
- *Area 10A is associated with nationally important designed landscapes.*
- *The Chase is also firmly associated with the legacy of the archaeologist Pitt Rivers.*
- *Coherent pattern of ownership through the centuries*
- *Low density pattern of scattered individual farmsteads and nucleated settlements*
- *High density of upstanding and known buried archaeological remains including prehistoric sites*

Summary of Statement of Significance

- *Landscape legacy of the relationship between the late survival of the chase rights and the survival of legible Medieval landscape character.*
- *Significant survival of hazel underwood centred on the Rushmore estate.*
- *Important evidential value in the form of a wealth of archaeological monuments, predominantly prehistoric in date, and distinctive historic landscape character*
- *Significant historical value with associations with Pitt Rivers amongst others*
- *Strong sense of communal value based on the generally well known history of the landscape*

Summary of Forces for Change

- *Changes in Woodland Management*
- *Changes in Agriculture and Farming*
- *Changes in Climate Change*
- *Changes in Land Holdings*
- *Changes in Settlement and Infrastructure Development*
- *Changes in Recreation and Tourism*

Summary of State of the Historic Environment

- *Significant gaps in our knowledge of woodland archaeology, the landscape legacy of the chase and building character*
- *Historic designed buildings are at risk from neglect in the Larmer Tree Gardens*
- *High numbers of scheduled ancient monuments at risk scrub and tree growth and arable ploughing*
- *Lack of local recognition of the landscape legacy of the Cranborne Chase and the legacy of Pitt Rivers*
- *Significant in the recording of the 20th century underwood industry.*

Summary of Historic Environment Actions

- *ACTION 1: Provide an AONB wide synthesis of the distinctive character of historic settlements.*
- *ACTION 3: Identify and record components of historic highways*
- *ACTION 5: Reduce unintended/accidental damage to buried archaeology or extant monuments*
- *ACTION 6: Gain AONB wide coverage of mapping and interpretation of archaeological features from aerial photographs*
- *ACTION 7: Record information on hazel underwood trade*
- *ACTION 8: Increase knowledge of woodland archaeology in the AONB*
- *ACTION 9: Gain greater understanding of the components of the Medieval hunting areas of the AONB.*
- *ACTION 10: Gain greater understanding of historic farm buildings and farmsteads*
- *ACTION 11: Enhance appreciation of the Prehistoric archaeology of the area*
- *ACTION 12: Widen knowledge of ways and means of maintaining historic farm buildings*
- *ACTION 15: Increase understanding of Medieval landscape elements of the AONB by academics, teachers and public.*
- *ACTION 16: Make more widely available enhanced and targeted information on managing archaeology in woodland.*
- *ACTION 17: Improve management of historic boundaries and ensure they are retained*
- *ACTION 19: Coordinate advice on historic parks and gardens management*

Linkages to other Historic Landscape Character Statements

This statement forms one of 12 Historic Landscape Character Area statements which cover the whole of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These are accompanied by AONB wide Historic Landscape Character Theme statements. These documents together build up a picture

of the key characteristics of the Historic Environment of the AONB at a landscape scale.

Other Historic Landscape Character Areas adjacent to this area are:



Area 3: Chalk River Valleys

Area 8: Chalk Escarpments

Area 12: Southern Downland Belt

Historic Landscape Character Themes (HLCT) of particular relevance to this area are:



Theme 1: Ancient Boundaries and Land Ownership

Theme 2: Farms and Farming

Theme 3: Fields in the Landscape

Theme 4: Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape

Theme 5: Hunting Landscapes

Theme 8: Landscapes of Prehistory

Theme 10: Routeways in the Landscape

Theme 11: Settlement in the Landscape

Theme 13: Woodland and Trees in the Landscape

History and Context

The Medieval hunting area of the Cranborne Chase covered a large part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. The inner bounds of the Chase straddled the Dorset Wiltshire border comprising an area of approximately 40,000 acres, and it is to this area to which Area 10A the Wooded Chalk Downland of the Cranborne Chase roughly corresponds. The rights to hunt on the Chase first came into Crown hands during the reign of William I and during the Medieval period they passed between the Crown and magnates close to the Crown before passing back to Edward IV in 1460. The Chase rights remained in Crown hands until the reign of James I when they were granted to Robert, Earl of Salisbury. By this time the Chase rights could only be effectively exercised over the Inner Bounds and in 1671 the rights to hunt in

Vernditch were sold to the Earl of Shaftesbury. In 1692 the remaining rights were sold to Thomas Freke of Shroton passing through inheritance to the Baron Rivers who held the rights until their disenfranchisement in 1829.

The Inner Chase, in which the Chase laws were most strictly applied, was split into a series of Walks. These provided the infrastructure through which the hunting grounds could be maintained. There were eight named Walks, and six of these were grouped into the inner Chase bounds forming the heartland of the Chase. The other Walks were Alderholt and Chettered. The Chettered Walk still exists in a diminished form as Chetterwood between the valleys of the Allen, and the Tarrant and roughly corresponds to Area 10B Chetterwood.

Post disenfranchisement of the Chase the open land surrounding the core woodland areas on the Chase Woodland has been the focus for parliamentary enclosure, See Theme 3: Fields in the Landscape for more information.

In the 19th century the area centred on Rushmore Park became associated with the father of scientific archaeology General Pitt Rivers.

During the 19th and 20th century the woodland in the area has been steadily transformed from coppice woodland to high forest.

B2 See Background Paper 2 for an overview of the archaeology and history of the AONB by time period.

B6 See Background Paper 6 for an overview of the key historical figures associated with the AONB.

B7 See Background Paper 7 for an overview of Major historical events trends and fashions and their impact on the AONB.

Key Secondary Sources

The main source of detail on the historic landscape is the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation report available from www.historiclandscape.co.uk

The main archaeological record for the area is the county based Historic Environment Record in Dorset and the Sites and Monuments Record in Wiltshire.

Information on the listed buildings in the area is available from English Heritage's Listed Buildings Online <http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk> .

Desmond Hawkin's book 'Cranborne Chase' (1980) provides an overview of the history and character of the chase. The Wiltshire Victoria County History also contains a useful summary.

Information on historic farm buildings in the area is only available at the scale of National Character Area as part of English Heritage's preliminary characterisation of historic farmsteads.

The Wiltshire Community Website on the Wiltshire Council Website provide a wealth of information on the parishes in Wiltshire in the area. This is complemented by descriptions of parishes in the Victoria County History of Wiltshire which are organised by Hundred.

Rolland Gant's book *Dorset Villages* (1980) provides a useful potted history of the villages in this area in Dorset.

Nearly all parishes in the AONB have had parish histories created for them and these are available from the relevant county reference library.

Information on nationally important historic parks and gardens in the AONB are available from the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

Information on the woodland in the area can be found in the AONB booklet 'A landscape view of trees and woodland' (2010).

Overviews of the archaeological evidence for past human activity in the Cranborne Chase are available from Martin Greens description of the Down Farm landscape in *A Landscape Revealed 10'000 years on a Chalkland Farm* (2000) published by Tempus, and in *Landscape, monuments and society, The prehistory of Cranborne Chase* (1991) describing research undertaken on the Prehistoric landscape by Martin Green, John Barrett and Richard Bradley and published by the Cambridge University Press.

The Rushmore Estate has produced a restoration plan for the historic park of Rushmore and the historic gardens at the Larmer Tree.

The importance of the shire boundaries in the early medieval period is discussed by Katherine Barker in an article in *The Chase, The Hart and the Park* (2009) published by the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.

B10

A full list of References is provided in Background Paper 10.

Landscape Scale Characteristics and Components

Ancient Boundaries and Land Ownership

- Section of the prehistoric boundary of Grims Ditch crosses the wooded downland of the Chase.
- The Wiltshire – Dorset county boundary runs through the heart of the Chase. This ancient boundary is associated with 'gate' place names demarking former crossing points on the boundary. Boundaries between parishes run east-west through the heart of woodland coinciding with the county boundary
- Shaftesbury Abbey exerted great influence in this area in the Medieval period as major land owners. Post Reformation five landowners vied for control of the area, the Frekes, the Arundel's, and the Earls of Pembroke, Shaftesbury and Salisbury.
- Several ancient parish boundaries meet at Chetterwood (Moor Crichel, Long Crichel, Tarrant Launceston, Tarrant Monkton and Tarrant Rushton) suggesting that the estates from which they developed had shared woodland as a common

resource. The same applies to the whole of the Rushmore to Vernditch area covered by the 955 Chalke grant to Wilton Abbey.

T1

See 'Ancient Boundaries and Landownership' for more information on this theme

Farms and Farming in the Landscape

- Mixed pattern of chalk grassland and arable fields, previous to the 19th century there was a much larger grassland component.
- Historic Farm buildings cluster on the edge of historic settlements and on the higher ground to the north of the area. The majority of these date to the 18th and 19th century and are constructed of local building materials including greensand.
- A series of historic farm complexes associated with Rushmore Estate are associated with small areas of designed landscapes in the 19th century.

T2

See "Farms and Farming" for more information on this theme.

Fields in the Landscape

- There is a high density of prehistoric and Roman field systems surviving as lynchets and crop marks recorded in the Wiltshire SMR and a similar pattern can be assumed for Dorset.
- In both areas the woodland is interspersed with pre 1800 assarts and pre 1800 fields. These fields are irregular in shape and surrounded by woods or fields with woods on 2 or 3 sides. This includes fossilised Medieval strip fields associated with small villages.
- The woods feature straight-sided 19th and 20th century fields around their edges which enclosed the formerly open downland and common land which they once abutted, and in the case of the Chase Woods replaced large coppices which once infilled the woodland.

T3

See 'Fields in the Landscape' for more information on this theme.

Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape

- The wooded chalk downland is associated with a cluster of Medieval deer parks and Post Medieval parks.
- Designed Landscapes are a key feature of this landscape these include a nationally important park of Rushmore with its plantations, clumps and avenues of trees defining lawns, all enjoyed through drives, walks and rides (EH Register of Parks and Gardens Grade II), and the even more important pleasure grounds designed by Pitt Rivers at the Larmer Tree (EH Register of Parks and Gardens Grade II*). The wider influence of unique estate architecture and style linked to estates such as Rushmore, and Ashcombe. Imposed distinctive decorative styles on houses, lodges, gates, railing and landscaping on top of the local vernacular architecture and wider landscape character.

T4

See 'Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape' for more information on this theme.

Hunting Landscapes

- A major element of this areas is that they form the inner boundary of the Cranborne Chase hunting area, which was divided into a series of walks. Research is needed into how these separate walks were delimited.
- Chetterwood is an outlying 'walk'.

T5

See 'Hunting Landscapes' for more information on this theme.

Industry in the Landscape

- Small scale relic chalk pits on steep sided downland areas of unknown date

T6

See 'Industry' in the Landscape for more information on this theme.

Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration & Defence

- N/A

T7

See 'Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration & Defence' for more information on this theme.

Landscapes of Prehistory

- Sites in the known archaeological record tend to be located in fields, on the edge, of woodland or in clearings associated with the Medieval woodland.
- The archaeological record here is quite rich and includes important prehistoric sites, features and settlements, including field systems, a large number of round barrows, and many undated linear features – the cross-ridge dykes. These dykes are all in area 10A.
- There is a high density of prehistoric findspots outside the woodland, these are mostly worked flint found through field walking.
- There are two Neolithic Long Barrows on Vernditch Chase. The more numerous Bronze Age round barrows are concentrated on the edge of the woodland blocks.
- The wooded chalk downland of the Cranborne Chase is associated with a cluster of Iron Age settlements and an Iron Age Hillfort, and several smaller 'forts' and one Bronze Age settlement.
- Many of the sites are associated with the legacy of the pioneer Victorian archaeologist General Pitt Rivers.

T8

See 'Landscapes of Prehistory' for more information on this theme.

Late 20th Century activity in the Landscape

- A modern golf course has been created at Rushmore.

Open Land

- The northern edge of HLCA 10A is associated with fenced areas of unimproved grassland and with a wider area of former downland now consisting of large arable fields.
- Former common land in the vicinity of Handley Green and Woodcutts was enclosed as these settlements developed in the 20th century settlement.



See 'Open Land' for more information on this theme.

Routeways in the Landscape

- Area 10A is associated with an irregular system of north south routeways. These funnel into key access routes, or pinch points, into the chase woodlands. These are at least Saxon in origin providing key crossing points on the shire boundary and are associated with indicative place names such as Bloody Shard Gate. This pattern has been infilled by modern permissive paths and Rights of Way along the county boundary and older 19th century enclosure roads running east west. The woods are crisscrossed by a network of more recent forestry tracks
- There are only 3 north south roads across the area 10A.
- A Roman Road runs north-east to south-west along the SE boundary of HLCA 10A but it is only legible in the northern half of the area area. Another Roman Road the Ackling Dyke runs through the eastern half of the Chetterwood Area (10B). Which ones?
- HLCA 10 A is crossed by a north-south turnpike but no milestones are known to be associated with this route.
- The area 10 A is bounded to the north by the ancient droveway known as the Ox Drove.
- Chetterwood is associated with a dense regular network of bridleways and the wood is laced with a network of tracks not all of which are public Rights of Way.



See 'Routeways in the Landscape' for more information on this theme.

Settlement in the Landscape

- Evidence of roman settlement in the vicinity of Tollard Royal.
- Deserted medieval settelement in the south of Chetterwood
- The wooded chalk downland is characterised by a low density pattern of scattered individual farmsteads and nucleated settlements. Some new settlements were created in the 19th century but there has been little 20th century addition. Buildings are commonly constructed of red brick and flint with white render, with thatch, clay and slate being used as roofing material.
- Historic Medieval churches – with associated churchyard features and rectories / vicarages. Tollard Royal has a thirteenth and fifteenth century church restored in the 1880s, while Ashmore church was built in 1874 to a design by Charles Edwards. Long Crichel church has a fifteenth century tower, but the remainder of the building is Victorian.
- The influence of the Rushmore Estate can be felt at Tollard Royal.
- There are two Conservation Areas in the wooded chalk downland [10A].

- Chetterwood, in contrast, is associated with pre 1800 dispersed linear settlement in nucleated rows which was infilled with 19th century settlement.
- There is a strong estate influence in design, layout, and materials at Long Crichel.



See 'Settlement in the Landscape' for more information on this theme.

Water in the Landscape

- Historic ponds in the centre of historic villages including Tollard Royal and Ashmore



See 'Water in the Landscape' for more information on this theme.

Woodland and Trees in the Landscape

- A key distinguishing feature of this Historic Landscape Character Area is its woodland. The main areas of veteran Medieval woodland surviving in the AONB are associated with the Medieval hunting area of Cranborne Chase.
- Nevertheless there has been a large proportion of woodland loss and little woodland gain since 1800. This is most noticeable in the north east of the area between Chase Woods, Stonedown Wood and Vernditch Chase which at the beginning of the 19th century contained extensive areas of coppice. Irregular woodland clearance also occurred in the area to the south of Ashmore Wood with the creation of new fields in the 20th century, though in this area these fields were interspersed with new smaller linear plantations.
- The area is exceptionally rich in ancient trees, coppices and significant hedgerow trees. In particular, the large field maples are characteristic of Cranborne Chase woodlands. Very large ash stools are found in the hedgerows and there are many grand beech trees that were planted in the late 1700s and early 1800s, in woodlands and copses.
- Much of the history of Cranborne Chase can be seen in the older trees, such as the avenues of beech planted by General Augustus Pitt Rivers, the pollarded holly and other rideside trees that were lopped to provide winter deer forage, and the ring beech plantations of the Shaftesbury Estate.
- The main body of woodland of the wooded chalk downland is around Rushmore and Tollard Royal.
- Rushmore remained a key centre of the hazel underwood history into the 1960s and large areas of hazel coppice survive.
- Chetterwood is associated with veteran woodland with old trees, semi-natural woodland species, coppice stands and wood banks.



See 'Woods and Trees in the Landscape' for more information about this theme'

Statement of Significance

Introduction

The area is highly significant both in terms of the strength of the historic landscape character, the visibility of time depth in the landscape and the richness of the built and designed landscape.

Coherence, Local Distinctiveness, Rarity, and Time Depth

The wider landscape character of this area is very coherent; this includes the key relationship between the late survival of the Chase rights (1829) in this area and the visibility of the 'Medieval' components of the landscape. This is a rare survival which contributes to a strong feeling of local distinctiveness.

Easily visible and generally clearly understandable time depth is a very present feature in these areas, including formerly open fields in the vicinity of Ashmore and common land fossilised in later field patterns, fossilised boundaries of ancient Medieval woodlands, the pattern of ancient routeways, and county and parish boundaries.

Patterns within the Prehistoric archaeological resource of the area are less coherent, the remains being largely isolated from each other with many also being hidden in woodland or preserved in patches of surviving grassland adjacent to areas in which earthworks are under the plough, or are in grassland.

Typical Surviving Components of the Area

- Archaeological earthworks in woodland and on grassland.
- Ancient routeways.
- Core areas of veteran Medieval woodland associated with old trees, semi-natural woodland species, coppice stands and wood banks.
- Large areas of hazel coppice representing the traditional hazel underwood industry.
- Ancient enclosure and assarts.
- The remnants of formerly great swathes of open grazed downland and semi enclosed downland (these are a key historical survival as well as an important natural habitat).
- The more recent imposition of 19th century enclosure on former common land and rough grazing.
- The remnants of Medieval deer parks.
- Sparse and largely dispersed settlement, with the exceptions of the three small villages of Tollard Royal, Ashmore and Long Crichel, all grouped around their churches.

Nationally Protected Heritage



See Background Paper 8 'Designated Heritage Assets' in the AONB for an introduction to nationally designated heritage.

There are 41 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, almost all in 10A. These are dominated by the following types of monuments:

- Two Neolithic long barrows in Vernditch Chase
- Bronze Age round barrows with a notable concentration on the edge of Rushmore
- Later Prehistoric and Romano-British settlements and field systems on former downland and open areas
- Harbins Park (Medieval deer park pale)
- Linear earthworks. Several of these are Prehistoric in date and include Grim's Ditch, and the Carrion Tree Rack.
- In HLCA 10B the only scheduled monuments are the better preserved stretches of the Roman road and the deer park pales in Hogstock Coppice.

There are 69 listed buildings. On the wooded chalk downland (HLCA 10A) these are associated with farmsteads, registered parks and gardens and the nucleated settlements, such as Ashmore. In Chetterwood Walk these are associated with dispersed cottages and farm houses. There is 1 Grade I listed building, West Lodge, and 2 Grade II* buildings, including King Johns House in Tollard Royal.

There are 2 Historic Parks and Gardens on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Rushmore Park (535 hectares) is Grade II, the Victorian Pleasure Grounds of the Larmer Tree, which are Grade II*, and sit within the wider confines of Rushmore Park.

There are 2 Conservation Areas – Ashmore and Tollard Royal.

Archaeological Fieldwork in the AONB



See Background Paper 3 'History of Archaeological Discovery in the AONB' for more information on this topic.

Notable features are the archaeological sites associated with the legacy of General Augustus Pitt Rivers, such as Woodcutts. Pitt Rivers is widely regarded as a central figure in the development of archaeology, establishing systematic and critical modes of excavation, recording and presentation (as demonstrated in the recently established permanent display of the Pitt Rivers collection in the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, and published in the four-volume *Excavations in Cranborne Chase*.

Excavations and writings of George Heywood Sumner in the early 20th century, a devoted follower of the General, who also focused his activities on the Cranborne Chase.

The Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society are currently undertaking a survey of the historic county boundary.

Field work undertaken by Martin Green, in the area including fieldwalking.

Evidential Value

The archaeology of the wooded chalk downland of the Cranborne Chase (area 10A) and that of the Chetterwood (Area 10B) area has never been systematically studied. Where information is available the county archaeological records indicate a wealth of archaeological features including:

- Extant (i.e. still exists as an earthwork) archaeology associated with woodland and surrounding areas of grassland fields including
 - important Prehistoric sites (enclosures, settlements)
 - many undated linear features
 - Neolithic long barrows
 - a large number of Bronze Age round barrows
 - Medieval features including deserted Medieval settlements and boundaries (particularly characteristic of area 10B)
 - Prehistoric linear boundaries including the Carrion Rack, and Grims Ditch.
 - Iron Age and Roman settlements
 - Roman and earlier field systems
 - Medieval deer parks including their pales
 - The Ackling Dyke Roman road in 10B

- Living archaeology associated with ancient woodlands and ancient boundaries, including ancient pollards and historic hedgerows.

- Palaeo-environmental potential especially for palaeo-soils sealed under prehistoric monuments.

- Historic borderlands including the Shire Rack between Dorset and Wiltshire and ancient parish boundaries.

- The buildings record is sparse but there are key historic farm buildings (especially in 10B) and ecclesiastical sites recorded. The area has a special vernacular style of architecture associated with the historic pattern of settlement and the influence of estate style in particular areas.

- Evidence for the traditional management of the underwood industries centred on Rushmore.

The key to the unique historic landscape character of both the wooded chalk downland of the Cranborne Chase (area 10A) and that of Chetterwood (Area 10B) is the history and legacy of the Cranborne Chase. The key attribute of this area in the Medieval period was its status as a hunting landscape (See Historic Landscape Character Theme 10 for more information). It has also helped preserve the other ancient historic landscape characteristics of the Wooded Chalk Downland, discussed in typical surviving components above.

Historical Value

Illustrative Value

High visibility of Medieval and Post Medieval landscape features including ancient boundaries, assarts, woodlands, and pre 1800 enclosure.

Surviving common land and place name evidence marks Medieval system of ancient common rights.

The lasting legacy of war graves and memorials provide a visible link to the First World War.

Associative Value

Old and New Wardour Castle are intimately associated with the Barons Arundells of Wardour, created in 1605. New Wardour Castle is associated with James Paine (1717-1789) English architect.

Fonthill Estates were shaped by William Beckford (1709-1770) and William Thomas Beckford (1760-1844). The latter was an English novelist, profligate and art collector. He enhanced the estates at Fonthill and built Fonthill Abbey, most of which collapsed under the weight of its poorly-built tower.

Compton Chamberlayne is associated with the Penruddockes, a wealthy local family in the 17th and 18th century. This association is marked by the Penruddocke Arms a local public house.

Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) was born and grew up in East Knoyle, where his father was rector. Little survives to celebrate the birthplace of this great architect, although the store above which he was born is known as 'Wren's Shop'. Sir Christopher Wren's Master Mason, Edward Strong, was also born in East Knoyle where he built a cottage and farm.

Several modernist houses in the area are associated with Alison (1928-1993) and Peter Smithson (1923-2003) architects.

Aesthetic Value

The aesthetic value of the area is derived from the visible presence of time depth in the landscape and the landscape scale juxtaposition of ancient woodland, fields and remnant open land.

The designed landscapes of Rushmore and the Larmer Tree have value in their formal design.

Communal Value

The area has a distinctive and fragile community cohesion based around the core estates, isolated villages and farmsteads.

Historically the area was associated with a history of religious non-conformity associated with both Catholicism and various Protestant groups (e.g. Baptists, and Quakers). This has resulted in a wide set of religious beliefs and practices in the area. For example Ashmore Village Plan (2006) identifies both the Church of St. Nicholas and the Methodist Church as key elements in the village and references the 'fierce independence' and 'god-fearing nature' of the village in the past.

Informal consultation undertaken at the Cranborne Chase Woodfair at the Larmer Tree Gardens in October 2009 for a Heritage Lottery Fund Bid underlined the importance of the immediate area to local people. Of the 91 local people questioned all felt the area

was special. They also felt that the heritage and cultural associations of the area were an important part of that “specialness”.

The people of Ashmore are very proud of the association with Luke Howard (see historical value) and reference him in their parish plan.

State of the Historic Environment

Introduction

The coherence of the historic landscape characteristics of this area has declined over the last 100 years. However the strength of this landscape remains the legibility of historic patterns of land use fossilised in the landscape. The greatest threat to this area is through lack of knowledge and understanding.

Current Knowledge

There are a large number and a considerable range of important archaeological and historical sites and features in the areas. There are, however, significant gaps in our knowledge and understanding of these areas, particularly within the woodlands: -

- When the existing known archaeological sites are plotted on a map, it can be seen that there is generally a high density across the area, but an obvious lack of information for woodland sites, including Ashmore Woods, Melbury Woods, Farnham Woods, Chase Woods, Stonedown, and Knighton and the whole of Chetterwood (10B). The exceptions to this pattern are Rushmore and Vernditch. In Rushmore this is probably due to the influence of the General – this does however demonstrate the potential for the other ancient woodlands & the longevity of the woods in question.
- There is a high likelihood that there are unrecorded Medieval deer parks within this area.
- There is a lack of information on post medieval historic management of woodland e.g. saw pits and industrial activity.
- The woodlands in particular may be hiding evidence of the chronology and form of agricultural land use as they expanded and contracted over the centuries.
- In many instances SMR and HER records are recorded as points and therefore do not give the wider picture, such as the extent of the Iron Age settlements.
- There have not been any systematic surveys of the features associated with ancient boundaries, including the Carrion Rack, the Shire Rack (ancient county boundary) and ancient parish boundaries, or any studies of their interrelationships.
- There has not been a systematic assessment of aerial photographs of the area and it is therefore likely that many barrows for instance, which have been ploughed out, have not been recorded. A recent Aerial Survey of sites in the Tarrant Valley by English Heritage discovered on average 12 new sites per square kilometre.
- There is a significant gap in the recording of the 20th century history of the underwood trade.
- Building records for the area are sparse.

Despite the importance of the Chase in defining the historic character of this area key aspects of the hunting legacy are either unknown or poorly understood.

- It is not clear what aspects of the Medieval landscape of the Chase survive including boundaries, traces of woodland management, settlements, walk pales and deer parks
- What evidence is there for the Chase's supposed Saxon origins?
- There has been no systematic survey of the archaeology within the woodland of the Chase which relates to its management during the Medieval and later periods.
- There is a lack of information on Medieval archaeological remains and historic buildings such as lodges, buildings, small settlements and patterns of land use.
- More research could be undertaken on historical features with biodiversity importance, such as ancient trees and unimproved grassland.

The area is associated with a dense historic pattern of rights of ways but the historic characteristics of all the routeways have not been systematically recorded.

Existing Levels of Protection and Heritage at Risk

There are 41 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Just under half of these (17) are deemed to be at high risk the majority either from scrub and tree growth or arable ploughing (English Heritage at Risk Register 2009). This is indicative of the risk to the wider known archaeological record and the impact on archaeological features that area as yet unrecorded, can only be guessed at.

The two Conservation Areas in area 10A do not as yet have Conservation Area Appraisals.

Loss and Condition

Over the last 100 years there has been substantial boundary gain including the enclosure of formerly open land and the subdivision of existing enclosure leading to deterioration in the coherence of the pattern of pre 1800 land use. Some of these new fields are in arable production with a potential impact on buried archaeology.

Over the last 100 years substantial areas of woodland have been cleared and other areas converted from coppice to high woodland. Much has also been lost to enclosure for agriculture.

Designed landscapes are a key feature of this landscape. There is a real threat to the designed landscapes through the lack of resources and locally available and affordable specialist skills to maintain their key features. This is illustrated by the situation at the Grade II* registered Larmer Tree Gardens where key built features are under threat from decay and lack of maintenance. Some of the original buildings have disappeared, some are out of bounds due to reasons of public safety and many need remedial work to safeguard them for the future (Larmer Tree Gardens Restoration Plan Part 1: The Gardens 2003: Rushmore Estate) and knowledge of the original design.

The area has a distinctive and special vernacular style of architecture associated with a historic settlement pattern. The wider built environment and its setting is still dominated by traditional building materials and techniques. The Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs LCA (2003) recognised the loss of traditional building skills and techniques such as cob building, lime plaster, flint and brick walls to maintain vernacular buildings. Understanding the importance of lime and other traditional building methods has improved over the last few years. However, many cob cottages are still repaired with inappropriate materials that can damage the main fabric of the building.

Loss of information on the management of the hazel underwood trade coupled with the decline in the traditional management of the hazel coppices.



See *Background Paper 4* for an overview of the change in land use patterns in the AONB.

Coherence

The Chase landscape has long been a focus for archaeologists specialising in prehistory due in no small measure to the pioneering work of General Pitt Rivers. However this legacy, both in terms of the Generals' contribution to the development of archaeology, the importance of the archaeological sites he excavated and his pioneering approaches to community education, has never been communicated effectively to the people who live and work in this area or indeed to the wider community at large. Rather, the General's work is now more closely associated with the places at which his famous collections reside, namely the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum in Salisbury. This lack of recognition of a key element in the area's history and the lack of the local ownership over aspects of the landscape shaped by this legacy may have implications for its future survival.

Much of the present Rights of Way (ROW) system within the area is the 'ghost' of a once much denser network of ancient roads, some originating from the royal hunting forest routeways that were used for centuries. Today, the combination of these routes and the important areas they traverse and connect has immense potential recreational value. The elevated nature of this landscape offers an abundance of dramatic, open and often panoramic views.

Forces for Change

Overview of the sensitivities of the landscape area to change

The relatively wooded character of this landscape gives it limited capacity to absorb change without reducing its overall visual integrity. The broad, rolling form of the chalkland relief ensures that most of the landscape is highly visible, since any one area might be viewed from a number of different aspects. This complexity and diversity, and an associated sense of unpredictability, combine to make a significant contribution to local character. This area is highly sensitive to change (AONB Landscape Sensitivity Study 2007).

For more information see “Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Landscape Sensitivity Study 2007”.

Overview of forces for change operating on the historic environment

Theme 1 Agriculture and Farming:

- Archaeological monuments already under the plough will continue to be ploughed for the foreseeable future. New crops and further intensification may increase damage to buried archaeology, and may change the appearance of the landscape and result in further removal of boundaries.
- In grazed areas changes in stocking densities and grazing regimes have the potential to rapidly affect the appearance of this historic landscape.
- Increased positive management of elements of the historic environment by landowners until 2013 as increasing number of farmers enter agri-environment schemes for a 10 year period. Maintenance of current agri-levels of agri-environment scheme monies would increase the numbers of land holdings undertaking positive management of historic environment assets. However the likely possibility of reduced levels of agri-environment money post 2013 could have a major impact on the positive management of archaeological sites and the wider historic landscape in the future. Further intensification of farming leads to major changes to the way in which fields are managed and used.
- Increased redundancy and conversion of historic farm buildings.

Theme 2 Climate Change

- Fewer frosts and drier summers, and the northward migration of pests and diseases, can be expected to make it difficult to maintain traditional planting schemes in some historic gardens; Some historically authentic tree plantings may not be viable by the time they reach maturity; A possible increase in the frequency of extreme weather, or a change in its geographical distribution, which could pose an increased risk of damage to some historic landscapes and buildings.
- An increased reliance on wood fuel might provide opportunities for the more active management of the woodland thereby helping to protect the archaeological remains it contains. Conversely woodland production could intensify activity, providing a threat to those remains.
- Potential impact of an increased reliance on renewables if inappropriately scales or insensitively located.

Theme 5 Natural Environment

- Closer dialogue between historic and natural environment interests should lead to the design of initiative that have mutual benefit. A better understanding of long term historical change may suggest potential for more innovative schemes that could include some reversion of intensively used land.

Theme 4 Land Holdings in the AONB:

- Landscape scale legacy of the great estates remain visible. In some areas conservatism in land use practices is encouraged and tolerated by estates, through the use of covenants leading to the maintenance of historic landscape character.
- Erosion in the historic patterns of land holdings resulting from farm amalgamation and diversification and the further intensification of agriculture. Decrease in profitability of small land holdings could lead to neglect of small or marginal areas of the AONB. This would lead to the loss of key elements in the historic landscape including fields, field boundaries, parish boundaries and trackways.

Theme 6: Recreation and Tourism

- Key assets remain under positive management but may be increasingly threatened by the impact of large visitor numbers. Historic and archaeological features could be threatened by new tourist enterprises, but careful design normally enables heritage and enterprise to coexist.

Theme 7: Settlement and Infrastructure Development

- Reuse of historic farmsteads provides increased opportunities for maintaining these structures that contribute much to the historic landscape character of the AONB as long as care is taken on the design of any conversions to retain original materials, openings and character. The creation of new farmyards with standardised farm buildings adjacent to the historic farmstead may lead to neglect of these historic assets or conversely to opportunities to ensure their future through well considered conversion.
- Continuance of the current road maintenance regime may lead to an increasing erosion of the historic character of rural roads alternatively the character of historic routeways could be improved through the implementation of rural roads protocol. The visual impact of overhead power lines on the historic landscape continues to be reduced by undergrounding.

Theme 8 Woods and Woodlands:

- Woodland in the future may be more intensively managed. This may have a positive effect on known archaeological and historic features but a negative impact on areas where such features survive, but have not yet been identified.
- Future need to balance the sensitivity of the area to landscape change, against the long-term trend towards high forest and the need to make woodland more resilient to climate change.



For more information see supplementary document "Forces for change operating on the historic environment of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB at a landscape scale and their past, current and future impacts".

Summary of Key Threats

- Scheduled ancient monuments at risk from scrub encroachment.
- Loss of final remnants of historic underwood industry
- The significant gaps in our knowledge and understanding of the archaeological and historic features of these areas, particularly within the woodlands, are a significant threat to the future survival and condition of important archaeological sites. They will not be taken into account in terms of the management of the landscape and many as yet unrecognised features of national importance will continue to decay.
- Key aspects of the legacy of the hunting area are either unknown or poorly understood.
- Many older Underwood workers who hold key information on the management of the Underwood trades in the areas are very old and there is a danger that this information will be lost.
- Buildings records for the area are sparse and the two conservation areas lack appraisals.
- Loss of traditional building skills and techniques.
- Loss of historic features and names of the chase

Historic Environment Actions



See Background paper 9 for a full list of Historic Environment Actions and the stages identified in their implementation.

ACTION 1: Provide an AONB wide synthesis of the distinctive character of historic settlements.

The Threat – Guiding change within the AONB's numerous historic villages is done best when there is an informed understanding of their particular development and character. Over half of the Conservation Areas in the AONB do not have a Conservation Area Appraisal, and there are only three Village Design Statements. Only one District has a design guide. This means that there is no easily available information source identifying the distinctive character of the settlements of the AONB overall and the specific characteristics of each settlement.

The Potential Mechanism – Characterisations of local settlements could be prepared to provide an accessible source of information on the historic characteristics of settlements in the AONB to inform planning decisions and ensure that the distinctive character of the AONB settlements is conserved and enhanced.

ACTION 3: Identify and record components of historic highways

The Threat - The historic highways of the AONB are an under appreciated component of the environment of the AONB and there is no coherent approach to their management and maintenance. The forms of the numerous routeways that thread through the AONB's countryside, and the lines they take, reveal much about their complex history. They are often the means by which people still move around and appreciate the Area's landscape, but like all other parts they are subject to change and

the erosion of character and fabric can lead to a loss of historic meaning. Although individual historic features associated with ancient highways, such as milestones, are recorded, the way that these features relate, and the setting of the historic highways, is often ignored. This action would increase understanding, appreciation and knowledge of historic highways and by doing so ensure that their key features are retained and appropriately managed. This action is intended to draw attention to the issues at the same time as realising the potential of routeways to enhance people's enjoyment of the AONB.

The Potential Mechanism - attention could be focused on the droeways of the AONB as these represent some of the oldest routeways and are served by a good Rights of Way network. One possible Mechanism could be through the creation of trails.

ACTION 5: Reduce unintended/accidental damage to buried archaeology or extant monuments

The Threat - Approximately 55% of the agricultural land in the AONB is cultivated. One result of this activity is the unintended damage and loss of buried archaeology. This is especially damaging in the AONB due to the complex archaeological remains which survived into the 19th century, for example prehistoric settlements set within extensive field systems. This damage can be mitigated against through advice to land owners delivered, in part, through the agri-environment schemes. The other area where advice can be of assistance is in increasing awareness and appreciation of more recent components of the historic landscape such as historic field boundaries (see Action 17).

The Potential Mechanism - Examples from other areas in the country suggest that advice to landowners aimed at reducing damage is most effectively delivered by specialist advisors. Many local authorities maintain a Historic Environment Countryside Advisor Scheme (HECAs) to maximise the gain for the historic environment from the various schemes designed to support the environment and rural economy (Higher and Entry Level Environmental Stewardship, Woodland Grant Schemes the AONB's own Sustainability funding, etc). A HECAS officer can be crucial in transforming the potential of these schemes into reality and in so doing help a range of agencies achieve their wider aims in regard of managing and enhancing the historic environment. In the CCWWD AONB it may be expected that a key role for a HECAS would be to provide targeted agri-environment advice aimed at reducing damage and loss of buried archaeology through ploughing.

ACTION 6: Gain AONB wide coverage of mapping and interpretation of archaeological features from aerial photographs

The Threat: The buried archaeology of the AONB has never been systematically recorded from crop marks displayed in aerial photographs. This means that there is potential for important archaeological sites to be damaged or inappropriately managed because they have not been recognised.

The Potential Mechanism - A mapping project for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB could fill gaps in knowledge of plough damage sites, uncover new sites, (through crop marks, earthwork patterns etc.), and spatially link known buried archaeology. The aim of English Heritage's National Mapping Programme (NMP) is to enhance the understanding of past human settlement, by providing primary

information and synthesis for all archaeological sites and landscapes visible on aerial photographs, or other airborne remote sensed data.

ACTION 7: Record information on hazel underwood trade

The Threat - Hazel coppice is a major component of the woodlands of the Cranborne Chase which until recent times were still managed traditionally. However, there is a lack of easily available information on the recent economic and social history of the industry (who practiced it, what the markets for produce were, why it flourished here in particular, and why it declined, etc), historic management practice and the condition of surviving hazel coppice. With increased understanding should come better material for presenting this part of the AONB's history, and a clearer rationale for any efforts to revive aspects of the industry. This information would help assist with the modern management of the woodland and provide an opportunity for increasing awareness and understanding of this important historic land use.

The Potential Mechanism It is likely that such understanding would best be developed through discussion with people of the area, those who may have practiced coppicing or those who remember aspects of the activity. The individuals who were involved in the traditional hazel underwood trade are now retired and there is an opportunity to record

ACTION 8: Increase knowledge of woodland archaeology in the AONB

The Threat - The woodlands are a feature of the AONB which conceal a wealth of information on past human activity. This includes archaeological sites such as settlements and field systems, as well as information on the historic management of the woodland, such as ancient pollards and wood banks, and evidence for historic woodland industries including saw pits, charcoal pits and lime kiln. The lack of information on the archaeological and historic features in the woodland means potentially nationally important and locally distinctive historic assets could be under threat from inappropriate management.

The Potential Mechanism – One potential Mechanism is to fill the gap in our knowledge of the archaeology concealed in the ancient and new woodlands of the AONB through a LiDAR survey. This could provide woodland owners and managers with the information they need to conserve and enhance these features. LiDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) is an optical remote sensing technology, normally used when flying over a study area. It is normally able to penetrate the canopy of woodland and accurately record as dense arrays of points the positions of earthwork and structural remains that would take considerable resources to plot with traditional ground survey. LiDAR, is improving our knowledge of the hidden inventory but it is becoming clear that results in tree cover is very dependent on how much finance was invested in the original air coverage, and it is likely that this action will require new surveys to be commissioned

ACTION 9: Gain greater understanding of the components of the Medieval hunting areas of the AONB.

The Threat - The Historic Environment Action Plans have identified the Medieval hunting forests of the AONB (Cranborne Chase, Grovely Forest and Selwood Forest) as one of the most important components of the historic landscape of the AONB.

However although the history of these areas has been studied their physical archaeological and historical components have not received similar attention. The role of the Medieval hunting areas, combined with the ecclesiastical powers who dominated land ownership within the AONB, and the relationship to land use and feudal society is poorly understood.

The Potential Mechanism – A forum could be established of local people and experts to direct research into the Medieval landscape of the area. This would help to fill the gap in our knowledge of landscape legacy of Medieval hunting areas of the AONB.

ACTION 10: Gain greater understanding of historic farm buildings and farmsteads

The Threat - Historic farm buildings and farm complexes are a key feature of the locally distinctive vernacular architecture of the AONB. There is, however, a lack of information on the location and character of historic farm buildings in the AONB, including their types, ages, typical components, materials, the ways they work together within farmsteads, the ways they have changed in the last few decades.

The Potential Mechanism - The national farmstead characterisation work championed by English Heritage could be built on to fill gaps in our knowledge of historic farm buildings and thereby helping to ensure that they are properly conserved and enhanced in the future. One approach would be to:

- Collate existing information and make it accessible
- Undertake additional research & survey

ACTION 11: Enhance appreciation of the Prehistoric archaeology of the area

The Threat - Although the Cranborne Chase is widely accepted in academic circles as containing internationally important complexes of Prehistoric archaeology, this is not widely appreciated by local people and visitors.

The Potential Mechanism - The lack of appreciation of the AONB's Prehistoric archaeology could be combated through the establishment of a series of self guided trails through which people could explore different aspects of the Prehistoric archaeology of the AONB.

ACTION 12: Widen knowledge of ways and means of maintaining historic farm buildings

The Threat - The Historic Environment Action Plan Steering Group identified that although there had been some good examples of schemes which had reused historic farm buildings, while still maintaining their historic characteristics, these were not widely known.

The Potential Mechanism - Good examples of the maintenance and reuse of historic farm buildings could be celebrated and shared with Local Planning Authorities and land owners thereby helping to conserve and enhance other historic farm buildings.

ACTION 15: Increase understanding of Medieval landscape elements of the AONB by academics, teachers and public.

The Threat - There is perceived to be a lack of appreciation of the Medieval components of the landscape: settlements, buildings, castles, fields, pastures, woodlands, roads, mills, hunting chase, parks, etc, all of which contribute greatly to the fabric and character of the AONB.

The Potential Mechanism - The lack of appreciation of the Medieval components of the AONB landscape could be combated by a seminar and the creation of a research framework to encourage further research in the area.

ACTION 16: Make more widely available enhanced and targeted information on managing archaeology in woodland.

The Threat - The Historic Environment Action Plan Steering Group felt that there was a lack of simple readily available information targeted at woodland owners to help them effectively manage the heritage assets in their woodland. The relationship between forestry operatives and managers and the archaeologists has to be convivial, and education of the operatives has so far been a major stumbling block. The heavy machinery involved in woodland management and harvesting is very destructive and is an ongoing problem.

The Potential Mechanism - An information base could be created for forestry operatives to help them better conserve and enhance the archaeology of woodlands, including information on protected heritage, good practice, information sources and heritage grant schemes for woodland. This could be promoted through a training day.

ACTION 17: Improve management of historic boundaries and ensure they are retained

The Threat - The historic fieldscapes of the AONB are key characteristics of the AONB landscape which are not managed in a holistic management. One example is the loss and gradual removal of the historic pattern of pre 1800 boundaries, including the distinctive pattern of small curving irregular fields around the Donheads.

The Potential Mechanism - This action would aim to halt the decline in the legibility of the historic field patterns of the AONB, as well as other important characteristics of the AONB landscape by providing training for agri-environment and other land management advisors.

ACTION 19: Coordinate advice on historic parks and gardens management

The Threat - Historic parks and gardens are a key characteristic of the landscape of the AONB but some historic parks and gardens are under threat from lack of resources and management schemes to conserve and enhance their key features.

The Potential Mechanism – One Mechanism is to provide the owners and managers of historic parks and gardens with advice and a readily accessible source of information.



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Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Historic Environment Action Plans

www.historiclandscape.co.uk

This document forms part of a suite of documents which together comprise the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Historic Environment Action Plans, or HEAPs for short. The HEAPs provide a summary of the key characteristics of the historic environment of the AONB at a landscape scale, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of this special landscape and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance these special characteristics.



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