



Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Historic Environment Action Plans

Area 3: Chalk River Valleys





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.

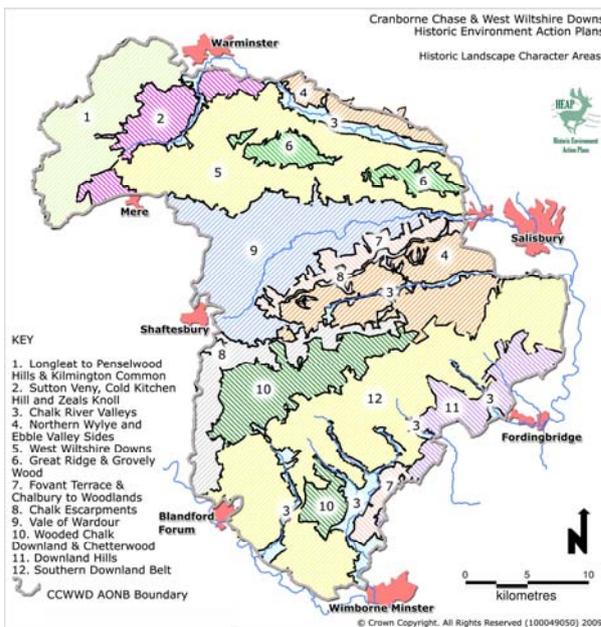
A series of icons help you navigate this suite of documents:

-  **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.

M2

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

This area comprises six discrete chalk river valley bottoms:

3A The Wylde Valley curves west to east across the north of the AONB flowing into the Wiltshire Avon. The Wylde valley creates a sinuous curve and its upper reaches which flow northwards towards Warminster before sweeping back east in a wide arc are more commonly known as the 'Deverills' after the settlements found here. The Wylde valley has carved a deep valley through the chalk and the bottom of the river valley is dominated by quaternary deposits of alluvium and river gravels. The valley floor is fairly flat forming a constant width of about 1 kilometres narrowing towards its source. The valley floor is comprised of meadows and damper pastures which in places have been drained and converted to arable and relic water meadow systems. This Historic Landscape Character Area is intrinsically linked to the river valley sides to the north (see Area 4) and the south (see Area 5).

A4

A5

3B The Ebble Valley flows west to east across the centre of the AONB from Berwick St John in the west to the Wiltshire Avon south of Salisbury. The river has also carved a deep, but broader valley through the chalk, the valley bottom of the Ebble is relatively straight and the river runs through a narrow floodplain. The course of the river is defined by valley gravels and alluvium. Small woodland belts and scattered trees, and damp pasture are a feature of the valley bottom as are relic water meadows.

A4

This Historic Landscape Character Area is intrinsically linked to the river valley sides to the north and south (see Area 4).

Areas 3C, 3D, 3E and 3F all form the tributaries of the Stour and Avon Valleys. These are comprised of series of parallel valleys which intersect the southern dip slope of the chalk. The upper parts of most of these valleys are dry. Most of the valley sides are shallow and have been exploited for the cultivation of arable crops or improved pasture. However some of the steeper valley sides still support unimproved chalk grassland or woodland. The narrow floors of the tributary valley contain wet pastures and the remnants of water meadows.

A12

3C The Tarrant valley flows north to south across the south of the AONB to the Stour. This Historic Landscape Character Area is surrounded by chalk downland (see Area 12).

A12

3D The Allen valley flows north to south across the south of the AONB to the Stour. This Historic Landscape Character Area is surrounded by chalk downland (see Area 12).

A12

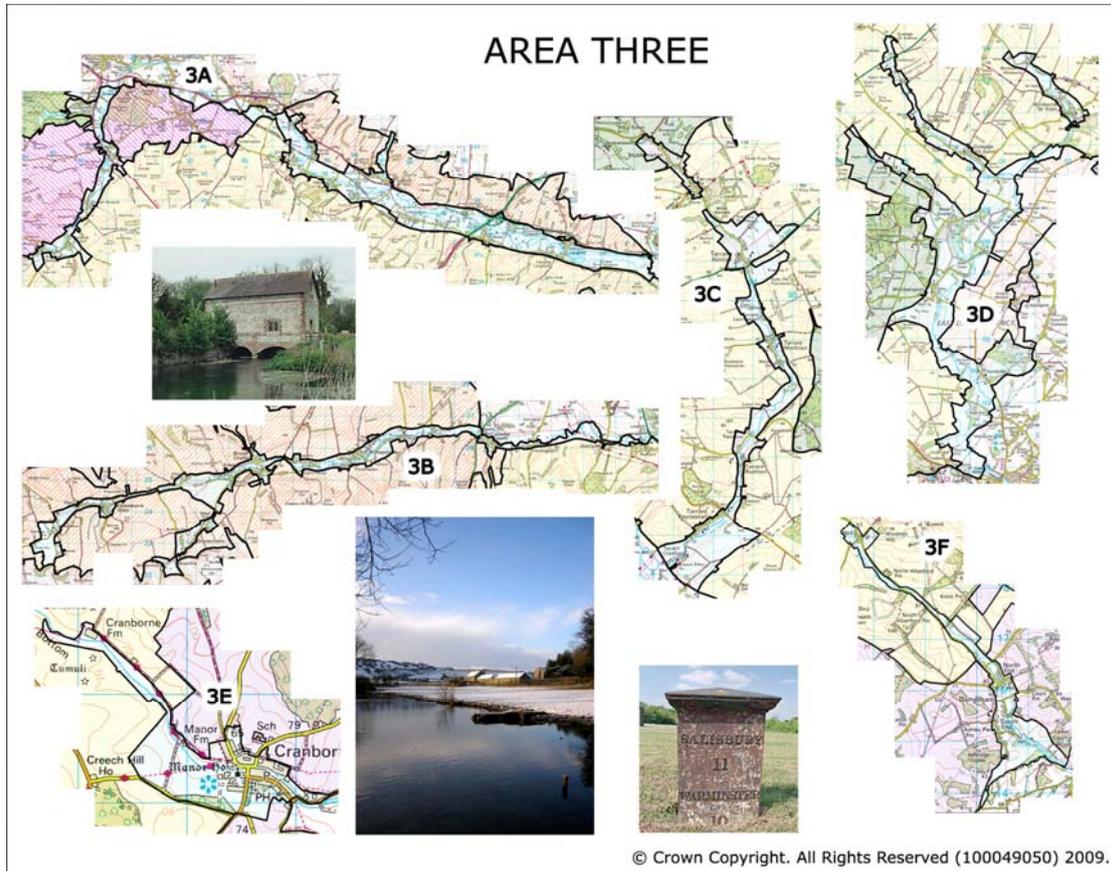
3E The River Crane flows north to south across the south of the AONB to the Stour. This Historic Landscape Character Area is surrounded by chalk downland (see HLCA 5B) and cuts through the downland hills (see Area 12).

3F The Allen River flows from Martin to Fordingbridge to join the Avon. This Historic Landscape Character Area is surrounded by chalk downland (see Area 12) and cuts through the downland hills (see Area 11).

A11

A12

Location Map



Summary

Summary of Key Characteristics

- *The area is by historic landscape types associated with valley bottoms.*
- *This includes networks of water meadows and meadows interspersed with small scale woodland.*
- *The Wylde Valley formed an historic boundary land in the Iron Age, Roman and Early Medieval periods.*
- *Ancient parishes form slices across the river valleys.*
- *The Ebble Valley has seen a sustained pattern of land ownership and land holdings.*
- *Historic sinuous routeways of parallel roads and tracks follow the river bottoms punctuated by historic crossing points.*
- *High density of historic settlement and houses based on a Medieval pattern.*
- *Tree cover is a vital part of the landscape forming sinuous ribbons along the valley floor.*

Summary of Statement of Significance

- *The wider historic landscape character of this area is very coherent*
- *There is a distinctive vernacular architecture*
- *Important evidential value in the form of nationally important historic buildings and the relationship between the river valley, the settlements and the downland above*
- *Significant historical value which is both illustrative and communal*
- *Strong communal value*

Forces for Change

- Changes to Agriculture and Farming
- Changes to Climate
- Changes to Land Holdings in the AONB
- Changes to Natural Environment
- Changes to Settlement and Infrastructure Development

Summary of State of the Historic Environment

- Further boundary loss or change to pre 1800 fieldscapes reducing the coherence of these features
- Continued decline of features relating to historic water meadow systems
- Potential loss of historic farm buildings and other built heritage not in active management
- Lack of appreciation of the Medieval components of the landscape
- Lack of information on former mills and their surviving components

Summary of Historic Environment Actions

- *ACTION 1: Provide an AONB wide synthesis of the distinctive character of historic settlements.*
- *ACTION 2: Record and maintain historic orchards*
- *ACTION 3: Identify and record components of historic highways*
- *ACTION 4: Identify historic water mills and associated features under threat*
- *ACTION 5: Reduce unintended/accidental damage to buried archaeology or extant monuments*
- *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 13: Enhance appreciation of the military history and archaeology*
- *ACTION 15: Increase understanding of Medieval landscape elements of the AONB by academics, teachers and public.*
- *ACTION 17: Improve management of historic boundaries and ensure they are retained*
- *ACTION 18: Identify key characteristics of hundreds and associated beneficial management*
- *ACTION 19: Coordinate advice on historic parks and gardens management*
- *ACTION 20: Promote understanding of positive management of water meadows systems by identifying good practice, benefits and skills and training required.*

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 (HLCA) adjacent to this area are:



Area 1: Longleat to Penselwood Hills and Kilmington Common



Area 2: Sutton Veny, Cold Kitchen Hill and Zeals Knoll

- A4** Area 4: Northern Wylve and Ebbles Valley Sides
- A5** Area 5: West Wiltshire Downs
- A8** Area 8: Chalk Escarpments
- A11** Area 11: Downland Hills
- A12** Area 12: Southern Downland Belt

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

- T3** Theme 3: Fields in the Landscape
- T4** Theme 4: Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape
- T11** Theme 11: Settlement in the Landscape
- T12** Theme 12: Water in the Landscape

History and Context

The intensive use of the bottoms of the chalk river valley has obscured many earlier traces of human activity in these landscapes. Where evidence is available it shows that this area was important in prehistory, suggested by both Neolithic and Bronze Age burial mounds in the valley bottoms, and was increasingly exploited in the Iron Age and Roman period, suggested by extensive field systems.

The pattern of Medieval settlement along the valley, and the pattern of ancient parishes, demonstrates that this area was being intensively exploited by this period and that it was important that manorial estates were able to exploit a range of resources, including valley bottom, valley side and the woodland and downland beyond. Access to water was a crucial factor in the positioning of settlements and the river was heavily exploited, including for water power in the form of mills, and as a source of food. The course of the rivers and their streams were often altered to provide artificial fish ponds.

This pattern of usage intensified in the Post Medieval period with the creation of sophisticated networks of water meadows which played a crucial role in Britain's farming economy between 1600 and 1900. The meadows formed a central feature of the local sheep/corn system of agriculture. They allowed for the artificial control of the watering of meadows using a sophisticated system of hatches, weirs, channels and drains. This allowed a lush crop of grass to grow several weeks before natural grazing

became available and allowed for greater flocks of sheep to be maintained, and thus more farmland to be enriched with manure.

The intensive exploitation of the chalk valley systems was further encouraged by the industrial revolution as water mills were increasingly harnessed to other forms of production, including the cloth trade. The coming of the railways opened up new markets for these goods, encouraging further production. Another way the chalk river valleys were exploited during the 19th century was by watercress beds, a pattern which continued into the 20th Century.

During the 20th century the use of the chalk rivers as a source of power has diminished. More recently the Wylde Valley has been quarried for gravel, the resulting lakes now comprising the Langford Lakes Nature Reserve.



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



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



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>.

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 pages on the Wiltshire Council Website provide a wealth of information on the parishes in Wiltshire. 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), published by Robert Hale London, provides a useful potted history of the villages in this area of 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).

The study of the environmental sequences of the Allen Valley are available in *Prehistoric Landscape Development and Human Impact in the Upper Allen Valley, Cranborne Chase, Dorset* by Charley French and colleagues (2007) published by McDonald Institute Monographs: Cambridge. These are supplemented by details reported in the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* (2003 Vol 69: 201-234).

Phil Harding has produced a reanalysis of Palaeolithic Hand Axes in the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* (2007 Vol 100: 65-73) entitled Palaeolithic Hand Axes from Warminster, Pewsey and Dinton: their place in the early re-colonisation of the upper Salisbury Avon Valley.

The archaeology of Water Meadows is discussed in '*Water Meadows. History, Ecology and Conservation*' by Hadrian Cook and Tom Williamson (2007) published by Windgather Press.



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

Landscape Scale Characteristics and Components

For each of the sub headings below there is also a summary statement of this theme for the landscape of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB as a whole.

Ancient Boundaries and Land Ownership

- Many of the chalk river valleys demonstrate a sustained pattern of land ownership.
- The Wylve Valley forms the northern boundary of the spread of Durotriges material culture in the Iron Age. It also provides evidence for the extent of spread of Saxon culture in the late 5th and 6th century AD.
- The Wylve Valley is crossed by linear north south parishes which take in a slice of valley and downland, those in the Upper Deverill's run east west.
- The ancient parishes in the Ebbel also take a north-south slice but they are much larger, relating much more closely to the pattern of ancient hundreds. They are bounded to the north by the ancient droveway the Salisbury Way and the county boundary to the south.
- In the southern chalk valleys the parishes form an east west slice across the Tarrant Valley but those in the Gussage Valley are much more irregular.
- The Ebbel has been subject to a sustained pattern of land holdings. It forms the vast part of the Chalke hundred granted to Wilton Abbey in 10th century which then passed to the Earl of Pembroke at the Dissolution. This long history of land ownership is visible in the landscape through the great avenues established by the Earls of Pembroke.
- In the Wylve Valley the continuity of land holdings is also represented by the influence of the Hungerford's in the Wylve Valley. Their landholdings were based on the pattern of ancient hundreds, three of which cut the valley.

Medieval ecclesiastical influence in the valley is represented by the remains of a hospital at Heytesbury which survives as almshouses, and were rebuilt in 1679.

- Similarly the influence of the Abbey of Shaftesbury in the Tarrant Valley is visible in the abandoned settlement at Tarrant Crawford. The original settlement was relocated to make way for a nunnery in the thirteenth century and in time the new site was also deserted.
- The continuity of landownership is felt in the Allen Valley through the influence of the Earls of Shaftesbury centred on Wimborne St Giles. This is represented by the creation of the parkland through which the river cuts.

T1

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

Farms and Farming in the Landscape

- Areas of grassland dominate in the bottoms of chalk valleys, associated with water meadows and other enclosed meadows.
- There are large numbers of historic farm complexes in the chalk river valleys, the majority of these date to before 1800. Historically these farms are associated with the sheep/corn system of agriculture.
- In the Wylde valley farmsteads tend to be larger and often are arranged on a loose courtyard plan with detached buildings set around a yard. Farmsteads are often associated with threshing barns. There is also a notable occurrence of timber framed aisled barns. Staddle barns from the late 18th century also occur. Many of the farm buildings in the Wylde Valley are built of Chilmark stone or a chequered pattern of knapped flint and crunch. From the late 17th century brick was used on larger farmhouses and to refront existing farm buildings.
- In the Ebble Valley pre 1800 farms also predominate, again with courtyard plans with detached buildings built of locally available building materials. There is more infilling here in the 19th century, with several farms relating to the Wilton Estate established. Granaries and stabling are a feature of this area.
- The farms in the southern AONB chalk river valleys are fairly numerous, especially in the upper reaches of the river valleys with a mixed pattern of courtyard and L-shaped plans. The principal manor farms were associated with two or three barns, sometimes up to nine bays in length. Granaries and stabling are also a feature of this area. The oldest barns and farmhouses are stone built, with brick coming to predominate in the 18th and 19th century.

T2

See *'Farms and Farming'* for more information on this theme.

Fields in the Landscape

- There are large scale water meadow systems throughout the chalk valleys. These have often obscured traces of earlier meadows and farming systems.
- In the Wylde Valley the water meadows are punctuated by areas of 19th century formal enclosure.
- The Tarrant Valley has a high instance of 19th century formal enclosure; these contain traces of pre 1800 field patterns.

- In the Allen Valley, 20th century fields also feature and these have heavily modified earlier pre 1800 fields.
- The Allen River Valley has traces of pre 1800 fields and meadows, being less dominated by water meadow systems.
- In the Ebble Valley some ancient fields have been recorded from aerial photographs.

T3

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

Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape

- In the Wylde Valley there is no nationally designated parkland but there are large numbers of locally listed historic parks and gardens.
- Tarrant Valley is cut by Gunville Park.
- Parkland is similarly dominant in the Allen Valley. The river runs through the parkland at Long Crichel and Wimborne St Giles.

T4

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

Hunting Landscapes

- The upper Wylde Valley was within Selwood Forest whilst its lower reaches were on the edge of Grovely Forest.
- The other river valleys were all within the outer bounds of the Cranborne Chase.

T5

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

Industry in the Landscape

- Water powered mills were an important aspect of all the river valleys many of the former mill buildings survive as private houses and are sometimes associated with remnants of the former mill workings including wheels, mill ponds and mill streams.
- They have a long association with 'brick and tile' works, 'domestic, decorated and fancy' pottery wares, 'pipe making', and extensive 'coppice working' (thatching spars, brooms, fencing and hurdling).

T6

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

Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration and Defence

- The military camps on the northern slopes of the River Wylde (see HLCA 4) are reflected by the Anzac cemetery in Codford.

T7

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

Landscapes of Prehistory

- There are a small number of nationally important Prehistoric features, including the Dorset Cursus which crosses the Allen Valley.
- There is a low density scatter of Mesolithic and Neolithic findspots across the Wylve possibly representing more intensive archaeological activity in this area.

T8

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

Late 20th Century activity in the Landscape

- The Wylve Valley is notable for the large lake at Langford, a nature reserve created after 20th century gravel extraction.

Open Land

- Formerly open meadows in the river valleys have been mostly obscured by water meadows.
- Areas of reed and wet woodland represent the location of former withy beds.

T9

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

Routeways in the Landscape

- In the Wylve Valley the routeways run along the valley bottom as parallel roads and trackways. These are connected at right angles to straight tracks and bridleways which run both north and south to the higher downland areas to both the south and north. One of these is the ancient droveway the Harrow Way. This pattern breaks down in the Upper Deverill Valley where there is a more irregular pattern of footpaths and bridleways. Two parallel turnpikes were created along the valley but only the northern road is marked by milestones. The impact of the development of modern transportation networks includes the 19th century railway which runs up the valley, the impact of road improvement at Crockerton and the modern junction between the A36 and A303. In addition the military railway to the WW2 camps at Codford is still visible as an earthwork.
- In the Ebbel Valley linear sinuous minor roads run up the valley parallel with footpaths. These are joined by access routes running both north and south leading to higher downland, which often mark key crossing points across the Ebbel. Those to the north connect into the ancient Salisbury Way droveway. There is a more irregular network of routeways around Bowerchalke.
- The roads in the southern AONB chalk river valleys also run along the valley bottom connecting into the A354, but these are linked into a much more irregular system of access to downland, not necessarily at right angles to the river floor. Several of the valleys are crossed by Roman roads and one follows the course of the Tarrant.
- The valley bottoms are associated with historic crossing points of the rivers including clapper bridges and fords. Some have been replaced with modern bridges, for example at Barford St Martin.

T10

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

Settlement in the Landscape

- There are a small number of nationally important Roman features including Roman roads and settlements. There is archaeological evidence for a Roman settlement in the vicinity of Codford in the Wyle Valley
- The known archaeological record is dominated by Medieval and Post Medieval sites, including shrunken and deserted settlements, buildings, ecclesiastical sites, watermills, water meadows and bridges. The deserted Medieval villages form an especially dense pattern in the Wylde and Tarrant Valleys.
- There is archaeological evidence for an Early Medieval settlement in the Wylde Valley and clusters of findspots along its length. There are also clusters of Early Medieval findspots recorded by the Portable Antiquity Scheme through the Tarrant.
- The chalk river valleys have a high density of settlement along their lengths, and the historic form of these settlements is a key attribute of these areas.
- This is a patchwork of pre 1800 nucleated and linear villages preserving a Medieval pattern of settlement, some of which has now shrunk to single farm complexes. The nucleated villages tend to be centred on manor houses and parish churches.
- Local building material is commonly stone and knapped flint, red brick or timber framed cottages.
 - The Wyle Valley is characterised by a high density of villages, both linear and nuclear in form, either side of the river. These focus around parish churches and manor houses. The typical building material is grey and honey coloured stone with slate and thatch roofs. Locally distinctive features are high thatched cob walls.
 - The Ebble Valley is characterised by a similarly dense pattern of hamlets and villages at close intervals, often with manor houses at their core. These are not as large as those in the Wylde Valley. Settlement has a linear form and several settlements extend up the valley sides. Both Broad Chalke and Bowerchalke show a greater range of building materials than in other settlements in the AONB.
 - The settlements in the southern AONB chalk river valleys are linear with the exception of the Allen Valley where the settlement pattern is more dispersed around the edges of the river valley especially on the edge of Chetterwood and Crichel Park. The linear settlement of Wimborne St Giles in the Allen Valley is formed by two parallel lanes either side of the stream. Cottages tend to be timber framed with render or brick, with large numbers of thatched roofs. Estate style dominates in some villages, noticeably Cranborne.
- The Wylde and Ebble Valleys have seen the greatest infilling of settlement in the 19th and 20th centuries. The north end of the Tarrant Valley has also undergone infilling.
- There are 26 Conservation Areas associated with this area, though only a handful of these have Conservation Area Appraisals.
- Notable buildings are associated with the villages, including a high number of manor houses and parish churches. The parish churches often contain

important historic building fabrics and are comprised of important focal points surrounded by historic graveyards and boundary walls.



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

Water in the Landscape

- Large systems of former water meadows comprise a series of complex and sophisticated bedworks, which used a system of weirs, hatches, channels and drains to drown the meadows. The channels are especially noticeable in low light or when the meadows flood in winter.
- Fish ponds dating back to the Medieval period, some however comprise modern commercial ponds.
- Watercress beds in the upper reaches of the chalk rivers dating to the 19th and 20th century.
- Former watermills now comprising modern accommodation associated with former mill ponds, mill streams and wheels.
- Gravel pits created in the 20th century in the Wylde Valley now form the Langford Lakes Nature Reserve.
- Remnant withy beds used to grow willow. These are irregular in shape and are associated with manmade channels to facilitate their irrigation. They tend to be in disuse and to be associated with more mixed tree cover today.



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

Woodland and Trees in the Landscape

- In the Wylde Valley tree cover is a vital part of the landscape along the valley floor. Lines of willows and poplars follow field boundaries and the past and present courses of the Wylde and its tributaries.
- In the Ebble Valley small broadleaved woodland belts and scattered trees line the narrow floodplain and are conspicuous along the course of the river.
- The narrow valley bottoms of the south AONB chalk river valleys are distinguished by the mature willows and poplars which form a dense ribbon of trees tracing the course of the rivers. The woodlands that occur are mostly broadleaved and are easy to date if they are related to parklands, which many of them are. There was a good deal of planting in the 18th and 19th centuries but some woodland does date from before 1750 and were included into later planned landscapes.



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, and the richness of the built heritage. However time depth in the wider landscape is less visible than in other areas. It has a strong historic, evidential and communal value.

Coherence, Local Distinctiveness, Rarity, and Time Depth

The wider historic landscape character of this area is very coherent. This includes the key relationship between the relic water meadow channel, and the wider landscape, and the other uses that the chalk streams have historically been put to, including withy beds and fish ponds. This is coupled with the coherent historic settlement pattern. These two factors contribute to a strong feeling of local distinctiveness.

The settlements of the chalk river valley systems are associated with a distinctive vernacular architecture using locally building materials, which varies between river valleys, but which often include the original Medieval demesne and church at their core.

Time depth in the wider landscape is less visible due to the water meadow systems which have obscured earlier landscape traces. However time depth is much more visible in settlement form, and in the built elements of the landscape, due to the high survival of pre 1600 buildings and the development of the settlements only occurring in the last few decades.

Patterns within the archaeological resource are generally less coherent and relate primarily to Medieval sites, including deserted Medieval settlements, fortified manors and ecclesiastical sites.

Typical Surviving Components of the area

- Ancient parish boundaries.
- Evidence for the continuity of land holdings, including boundaries and avenues.
- Large scale water meadow systems.
- Mixed pattern of fields, including pre 1800, 19th and 20th century fieldscapes
- Historic parks and gardens.
- Military cemeteries and memorials.
- Areas of reed and wet woodland represent the location of former withy beds.
- Historic pattern of routeways and river crossing points, including fords and clapper bridges.
- Deserted Medieval villages existing as earthworks.
- High density of settlement along their lengths, and the historic form of these settlements, is a key attribute of these areas. These also provide a rich architectural history in the range of formal and vernacular historic buildings present.
- Small historic woodlands and scattered trees.

Nationally Protected Heritage



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

There are a small number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (16) compared with other areas, this number is quite low in relation to the size of the area. There are no SAMs in the Crane Valley or the Allen River. The SAMs date to a range of periods and include Medieval sites (including former abbey precincts, motte and bailey castles, moated manors and stone cross) and prehistoric sites such as round barrows.

There are a high number of listed buildings (588) in the area which are stretched out along the valley bottoms. There are 5 Grade I listed buildings which are all manor houses, and 36 Grade II* listed buildings comprising a range of building types, including churches, manor houses and farm buildings.

There are 2 registered park and gardens; Crichel House in the Allen Valley and Cranborne Manor in the Crane Valley. The parkland associated with St Giles House also cuts through the Allen Valley.

There are 26 Conservation Areas in the area.

Archaeological Fieldwork in the AONB



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

Charly French, Mike Allen and Helen Lewis undertook a Palaeo-environmental and archaeological investigation of the upper Allen Valley of Cranborne Chase, Dorset, between 1998 and 2003.

East Dorset Antiquarian Society have been undertaking excavations in recent years focusing particularly on the Allen Valley.

Evidential Value

There has been no systematic study of archaeological fieldwork in this area, although there has been a programme of excavation in the Allen Valley. Where information is available the county Historical Environment Records, amongst other sources, indicate features including:

- Archaeological sites such as:
 - One Neolithic long barrow and a small number of Bronze Age round barrows.
 - Extensive Iron Age field systems.
 - Site of a Roman temple.
 - Medieval ecclesiastical sites including the site of Tarrant Abbey.
 - Medieval motte and bailey castles and moated manors.
 - Medieval strip lynchets on the sides of the river valleys.
 - Shrunken and deserted Medieval settlements and farmsteads.
 - Farmsteads of Medieval origins surviving as earthworks.

- Post Medieval industrial sites in the Wylve Valley.
- Sites of former mills.
- Undated circular enclosures especially in the Wylve Valley.
- Undated field systems.
- Undated linear features often associated with parish boundaries.

In general many of the archaeological sites in the chalk river valleys survive as earthworks as they have not been subject to systematic ploughing. However the extensive water meadow systems have obscured earlier evidence while other archaeological sites are under the modern footprint of settlements.

- Seventy find spots including many Roman and Medieval finds.
- Large scale systems of relic water meadows providing evidence of the former management of the area.
- Nationally important historic parks and gardens
- High Palaeo-environmental potential of the area.
- An extremely rich building record including locally distinctive vernacular architectures and nationally important churches and manor houses. Other important built heritage includes:
 - Medieval tithe barns
 - Post Medieval farm buildings
 - Medieval manor houses
 - Post Medieval bridges and clapper bridges
 - Relic mill houses and races

The key to the unique historic landscape character of this area is the relationship between the river valleys, the settlements and the downland linked by a system of ancient parishes. Another key element is the relationship between the settlements and monasteries in the Medieval period which helped create the surviving ancient historic landscape characteristics of this area, discussed in typical surviving components. For example, the desertion of villages in the Tarrant Valley.

Historical Value

Illustrative Value

Highly legible pattern of ancient parishes and settlements each with a Medieval manor and church at its core, emphasised by the visible remains of deserted Medieval villages.

Evidence of monastic ruins can be used to illustrate the importance of the Great Monastic houses between AD 1066-1536 and illustrate the dissolution of the Monasteries AD 1536-1541.

Deserted Medieval villages illustrate the expansion and retraction of the Medieval population.

Transformation of church interiors illustrates the English Reformation AD 1500-1600 and the Church of England breakaway from the authority of the Pope.

Highly legible post dissolution pattern of land ownership can be used to illustrate the rise of the new peers, landed gentry and yeoman classes AD 1600-1800.

Highly legible pattern of disused water meadows, especially when flooded, providing linkages to the sheep/corn system of agriculture.

Evidence for former mills and water wheels along all of the chalk river valley systems, as well as railway lines, can be used to illustrate the industrial revolution AD 1750-1900.

The remains of Kitchener's new armies' camps in the Wylve Valley, and the lasting legacy of war graves and memorials, provide a visible link to the First World War.

Associative Value

Cranborne Manor is intimately associated with the Earls of Salisbury who also had control of the lordship of Cranborne Chase. In addition the Frekes of Iwerne Courtney, substantial local family during the 16th and 17th century, at one time leased Cranborne Manor.

Sir Anthony Eden (1897–1977) was British Prime Minister from 1955 to 1957. He retired to Alvediston and is buried in the churchyard.

William Cobbett's (1763 – 1835) Rural Rides, which first appeared in serial form in the Political Register running from 1822 to 1826 features, contains descriptions of the chalk river valleys of the AONB.

Aesthetic Value

The aesthetic value of the area is derived from the historic settlements which have only seen moderate 20th century development and the juxtaposition between the large scale systems of water meadows, and older land uses including Withy beds and meadows.

Communal Value

The river valleys have historically been a focus for settlement in the AONB.

The South Tarrant village plan identifies the importance of the Medieval history of the Tarrant's to the character of the settlements, including the Cistercian nunneries in England; the burial place of Joan Queen of Scotland in 1238. The settlements are perceived as having a strong sense of time depth. The former importance of Tarrant Rushton airfield is also highlighted

State of the Historic Environment

Introduction

The coherence of the historic landscape characteristics of this area has declined over the last 100 years. Some of the individual components of this landscape however are in good condition and enjoy active management, including key historic buildings and parks and gardens.

Current Knowledge

Some of the archaeological sites in the area have been subject to targeted archaeological survey and research. The best understood feature in these areas are the nationally important parks and gardens, and scheduled ancient monuments.

There are significant gaps in our knowledge and understanding of this area including:

- A lack of information on the history and development of mills in the area and the remaining built heritage associated with this history.
- Building records for this area are sparse and many local buildings of importance remain unrecognised.
- There is a lack of information on historic farmsteads.
- There have not been any systematic surveys of the features associated with ancient parish boundaries, and the ancient Hundreds or any studies of their interrelationships.
- There is no synthesis of the Medieval features of this area, deserted settlements, fortified manors and the relationship between them.
- There is a lack of understanding of the ecclesiastical history and archaeology of these areas.

The AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation has revealed the character of the wider historic landscape, but further information is required on the history and development on the pre1800 enclosure and veteran woodland in the area.

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

Three SAMs are at high risk. There are no SAMs in the Crane Valley or the Allen River. The SAMs in this area are under threat from scrub and tree growth, stock erosion and ploughing (English Heritage at Risk Register 2009). This is indicative of the risk to the wider known archaeological record.

There are four sites on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register (2009). The Grade I listed building of St Giles House in Wimborne St Giles and the Grade II* Grotto associated with it, Tarrant Abbey Farm Barn and out buildings and the remains of Medieval buildings at Witchampton.

Only nine of the twenty-six Conservation Areas have appraisals.

Loss and Condition

Over the last 100 years there has been considerable change in the river valley bottoms and a loss of coherence to the 1880s pattern of enclosure and the potential loss of earlier historic boundaries. Over 100 existing field boundaries have been lost and over 200 new field boundaries created. This pattern has occurred throughout the chalk river systems.

Watermeadows created between 1700 and 1900 have also obscured traces of earlier land uses and where pre 1800 fields do survive these have been heavily modified. Areas of grassland still dominate but the watermeadows are no longer in active management and many of their features are in a very poor state.

The belts of woodland along the valley floor have seen little overall addition or shrinkage over the last 100 years though they have expanded or contracted at individual locations depending on the management of the water course at a particular location.

Creeping change has had an impact on the historic pattern of settlement, especially in the Wylde and Ebbel Valleys. The state of the wider built heritage in the area is unknown, but as many of the known listed features are either in active management as part of designed landscapes, or as residential dwellings, it can be postulated that the condition of most buildings is good. The main risks being to any redundant farm buildings, features not in active management or to features with high maintenance costs such as churches. No working watermills survive despite the fact that this was a very common building type until the 20th century, and the features associated with them, such as mill races, tend to be in poor condition.

The historic parks and gardens in the area are in generally good condition and in active management, though there are instances of neglect.

Archaeological earthworks in this area tend to be in good condition due to the high proportion of grassland in the river valleys, though some archaeological sites are at risk from scrub encroachment and erosion.



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

Coherence

The three most coherent features in this landscape are the settlements with their concentration of historic buildings and other historic features, the historic parks and gardens and finally the relic systems of watermeadows. The latter are most visible in winter when the relic bedworks flood. The important archaeological sites and features in this area are not so easily appreciated, despite many of them existing as earthworks, due to the lack of interpretation of, and access to, these sites. Earlier land uses in this landscape are less coherent, including surviving traces of pre 1800 fields, including meadows and other features such as withy beds.

Forces for Change

Overview of the sensitivities of the landscape area to change

The Wylde Valley is a deep valley that is enclosed by steep chalk slopes and this engenders a semi-enclosed character on the valley floor, which gives rise to an intimate sense of scale. The sensitivity of this landscape to change is moderately-high.

In the Ebbel Valley the small distinctive villages and manors built of a rich variety of local materials are still largely intact. This is a peaceful rural landscape located far away from the major roads, thus most forms of development would have a deleterious effect on the experiential attributes of this area. The sensitivity of this area is thus judged to be moderate-high.

In the Stour-Avon valley landscape, changing land uses have an important visual influence. Smaller, narrow fields, in places fossilising old strip patterns, predominate around the villages and are particularly vulnerable to pressures related to intensive arable farming. There are many examples of small valleys where the large arable fields of the adjacent chalk uplands have swept down into the valley, disrupting the visual structure and integrity of this landscape. The valleys also provide a sheltered environment for country houses and their designed parkland. The sensitivity of this area to change is high.

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

- Increased positive management of elements of the historic environment by landowners until 2013 as an increasing number of farmers enter agri-environment schemes for a 10 year period. Maintenance of current 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.
- Changes in stocking densities and grazing regimes have the potential to rapidly affect the appearance of this historic landscape. Small scale historic field patterns beyond downland areas could see changes in management and be merged. In addition archaeological monuments on surviving grassland need carefully planned grazing regimes if they are to remain free of scrub.

Theme 2: Climate Change

- More frequent and severe flooding, which may damage some historic buildings.
- Increased ground subsidence could pose a threat.

- 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 as well as trees.
- Construction of new small scale renewable energy infrastructure, such as hydroelectric turbines, may also have a direct archaeological impact on riverside remains.
- Small scale hydro-electric projects may provide opportunities for the careful reuse of mills, water wheels, and mill races.
- Use of heavy machinery and increased woodland planting, providing a threat.
- Some micro-renewable energy infrastructure might be suitable to fit on historic buildings.
- Energy saving measures could detract from the historic character and fabric of buildings.

Theme 4: Land Holdings in the AONB

- 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 5: Natural Environment

- Increased demand on irrigation requirements throughout the summer, with potential water shortages leading to a knock on impact on maintenance of historic features in valley floors and wider afield, including lakes, ponds and relic water
- Closer dialogue between historic and natural environment interests should lead to the design of initiatives 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 7: Settlement and Infrastructure Development

- Opportunity to enhance historic character through the building of carefully designed and sited buildings, potential for negative impact of poorly located and designed buildings, especially outside of Conservation Areas. Threat to buried archaeological remains, archaeological earthworks and historic field patterns on the edge of settlements from development. Potential for an extension of Permitted Development Rights leading to a gradual and accumulative loss of historic character.
- 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.



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

- Further boundary loss or change to pre 1800 fieldscapes reducing the coherence of these features.
- Continued decline of features relating to historic water meadow systems.
- Potential loss of historic farm buildings and other built heritage not in active management.
- Erosion of historic landscape character in key historic settlements lacking Conservation Area Appraisals. Erosion of historic pattern of settlement through poorly conceived infilling of existing settlements.
- Lack of appreciation of the Medieval components of the landscape.
- Lack of information on former mills and their surviving components.

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 and the Opportunity – 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 either individual settlements or the rural settlements of the AONB overall.

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

ACTION 2: Record and maintain historic orchards

The Threat and the Opportunity – Orchards were once found on the edges of most of the AONB’s villages, but few survive. There is no coherent approach to the maintenance of surviving traditional orchards in the AONB. However before this issue can be dealt with more information is required on the location, extent and survival of historic orchards.

The Potential Mechanism - 19th century Ordnance Survey maps show that orchards were once numerous, especially in the chalk river valleys of the AONB. This action would first identify the location and extent of both former and surviving orchards within the AONB, then consider the issues involved in their sustainable maintenance and then identify the next steps to ensure that they are conserved and enhanced.

ACTION 3: Identify and record components of historic highways

The Threat and the Opportunity - 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 to each other, 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 initially on the droveways 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 self-guided trails.

ACTION 4: Identify historic water mills and associated features under threat

The Threat and the Opportunity - Historic mills are an unstudied and under appreciated component of the AONB, although historic 19th century Ordnance Survey maps demonstrate that there were numerous examples along the chalk river valleys of the AONB. Lack of awareness of the history, numbers and condition of surviving mills leaves this important historical resource vulnerable, especially at a time when many rural buildings are subject to alteration in advance of reuse. The lack of information about this historic feature means that key features may be lost through development, lack of maintenance, lack of modern use or unsympathetic land management.

The Potential Mechanism - This action, as a starting point, could determine the extent of former and surviving mill buildings and associated features such as water wheels and mill races. It would also determine their general condition and suggest further steps which could be taken to ensure their preservation.

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

The Threat and the Opportunity - 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 agri-environment schemes. Another 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 Service (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 with regard to 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 10: Gain greater understanding of historic farm buildings and farmsteads

The Threat and the Opportunity - 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 buildings and spaces like yards work together within farmsteads, and 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 help to ensure that they are properly conserved and enhanced in the future, or to ensure that any reuse is undertaken sensitively and on the basis of full understanding of the original form and function of the structures and spaces. 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 and the Opportunity - 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 and the Opportunity - 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 inspire the conservation and enhancement of other historic farm buildings and farmsteads.

ACTION 13: Enhance appreciation of the military history and archaeology

The Threat and the Opportunity - The military history and archaeology of the AONB landscape is an under appreciated component of the story of the AONB. This includes the camps established for Kitchener's new armies in 1914, Second World War camps and airfields, and Cold War sites, including RAF Chilmark.

The Potential Mechanism - The lack of appreciation of surviving military remains in the AONB could be combated by making information on the military historic and archaeology of the AONB more accessible and by identifying private collections of information which will shed light on these important aspects of the historic environment of the AONB. Individuals who have drawn together historic material could be encouraged to become involved in a study of surviving remains. An event could be organised to coincide with the centenary of WW1 in 2014.

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

The Threat and the Opportunity - There is perceived to be a lack of appreciation of the Medieval components of the AONB's 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 as it survives today.

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 that encourages and sets out a range of achievable goals for further research in the area.

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

The Threat - The historic fieldscapes of the AONB are key characteristics of the AONB landscape which are not at present subjected to integrated and holistic management. There has consequently been loss and gradual removal of the historic patterns of pre 1800 boundaries, including the distinctive pattern of small curving irregular fields around the Donheads. Elsewhere older field boundaries have not been maintained and are either degrading or, if originally hedgerows are becoming overgrown.

The Potential Mechanism - This action would aim to halt the decline in the condition of particular field boundaries and the legibility of historic field patterns by providing training for agri-environment and other land management advisors. There is already much advice available on historic field boundary conservation (including implementation of the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations) and management, often generated via the HECAS officers mentioned under Action 5, but most of this is specific to the region's where it was generated. However, this material can be reviewed and tailored to suit the needs of the AONB once a clearer understanding has been gained of the character and needs of the field boundaries within the Area.

This material should then form the basis of training sessions for farmers and land managers working within the AONB. Involvement in such an initiative might be attractive to partners such as FWAG, the National Trust, Natural England and the local Wildlife Trusts.

ACTION 18: Identify key characteristics of hundreds and associated beneficial management

The Threat and the Opportunity – The Medieval hundreds in the AONB are associated with unique patterns of historic land use and management. For example the Chalk Hundred centred on the Ebble Valley was the focus of a consistent pattern of landownership until the 20th century. This has resulted in a recognisable and locally distinctive historic landscape character in the area which is not widely recognised and understood. The distinctive patterns of land use that underpin that character may be in danger of erosion through management that may not be based on historical awareness.

The Potential Mechanism - This action aims to help deal with the erosion of the distinctive landscape scale character of the Hundreds in the AONB first through study of changing land management and then through the use of the results of that to inform the raising of awareness among land managers and farmers.

ACTION 19: Coordinate advice on historic parks and gardens management

The Threat and the Opportunity - 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 inability to become involved in management schemes to conserve and enhance their key features.

The Potential Mechanism – An initial approach to this issue might be to provide the owners and managers of historic parks and gardens with advice and a readily accessible source of information on achievable best practice. Such material is available elsewhere in southern England (often generated by HECAS officers and usually based on carefully constructed Conservation Management Plans). This could be reviewed and tailored to the needs of the AONB as a whole and to particular parks and gardens as required. Registered Parks and Gardens and those that contain assets subject to other forms of designation (Scheduling, Listing, SSSIs, etc) should ideally be subjected to the preparation of a fully and carefully considered management plan.

ACTION 20: Promote understanding of positive management of water meadows systems by identifying good practice, benefits and skills and training required.

The Threat and the Opportunity - The sheep-corn system of agriculture was a dominant part of the rural economy in the AONB landscape between AD 1600 and AD 1900, and is still represented by the extensive pattern of historic water meadow systems which exist throughout its chalk valleys of the AONB. These extensive features have never been surveyed and are no longer in a landscape scale system of management.

The Potential Mechanism - This action will help to combat this threat by providing, as a starting point, a survey of the extent and surviving components of the water meadows in the AONB; and identifying good practice examples of their management. If a National Mapping Programme project can be established for the AONB then this could include the careful plotting of the patterns of water meadow systems.



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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.



AONB Office,
4 Castle Street,
Cranborne,
BH21 5PZ
Tel: 01725 517417
email: info@cranbornechase.org.uk

www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk