



Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Historic Environment Action Plans

Area 4: Northern Wylye and
Ebble Valley Sides





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.

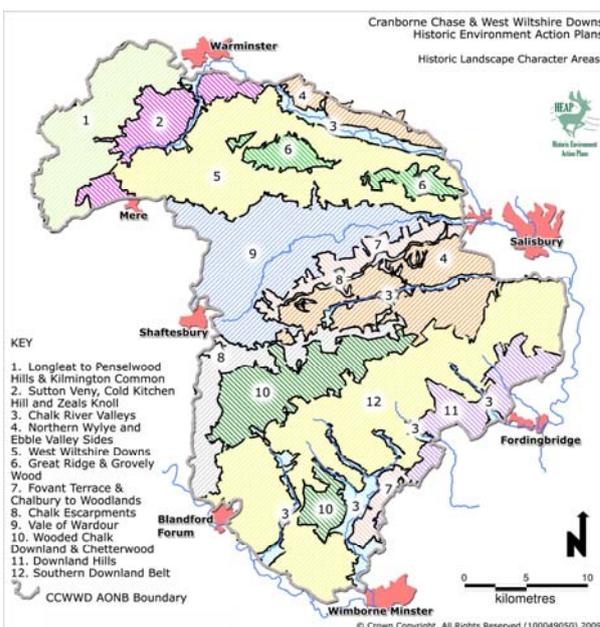
A series of icons help you navigate this suite of documents:

-  **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)**

Contents

Introducing the Historic Landscape Character Areas 1
 Location, Geology, Land Use and Topography 1
 Location Map 2
 Summary 3
 Linkages to other Historic Landscape Character Statements 4
 History and Context 5
 Key Sources 6
 Landscape Scale Characteristics and Components 6
 Statement of Significance 10
 State of the Historic Environment 12
 Historic Environment Actions 16

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

This area comprises two discrete areas of the AONB.

Area 4A is comprised of the northern side of the River Wylye in the north of the AONB has far west as Warminster. The Wylye valley has carved a deep valley through the

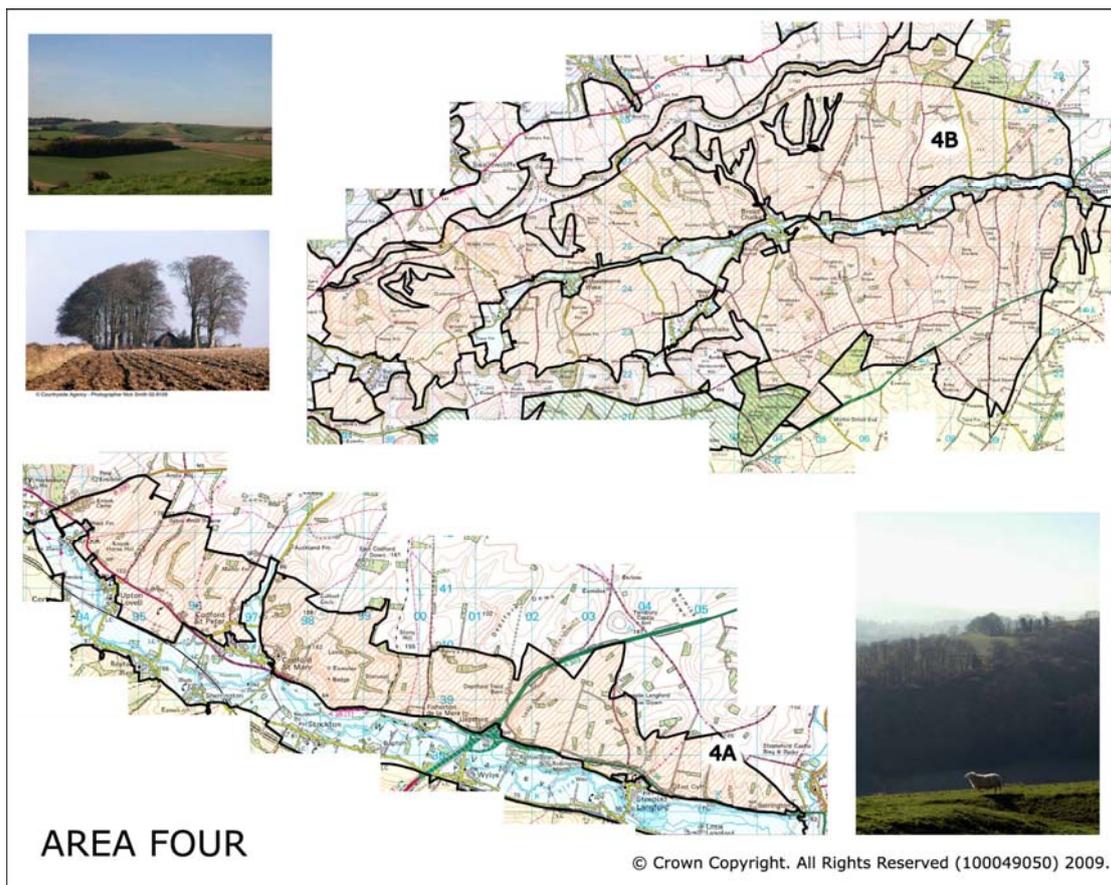
chalk so that the Upper Middle and Lower Chalk is exposed on the valley sides supporting well drained shallow calcareous soils. The valley slopes have been eroded by a series of small dry tributaries rise comparatively gentle compared with the southern slopes. Steeper sections have retained chalk grassland but arable fields dominate giving way to dry pasture on the lower valley slopes. This Historic Landscape Character Area is intrinsically linked to the river valley bottom below (see Area 3).

A3

Area 4B is comprised of both the southern and northern sides of the Ebble Valley. This forms a broad valley which has eroded through the chalk geology including many dry tributary valleys which are deeply eroded into the chalk slopes giving rise to an undulating land form. The shallow slopes and contrasting deep chalk combs give the valley a distinctive downland appearance. The valley is dominated by arable fields although some chalk grassland survives at the steepest locations. There is a regular occurrence of small copses, shelterbelts and avenues. This Historic Landscape Character Area is intrinsically linked to the river valley bottom below (see Area 3).

A3

Location Map



Summary

Summary of Key Characteristics

- *The historic landscape in these areas is extremely homogenous.*
- *The known archaeological record is dominated by undated circular and linear features, enclosures and field systems.*
- *Blocks of 19th century enclosure dominate.*
- *Ebble Valley has been subject to sustained pattern of historic land holdings*
- *There are blocks of regular 20th century plantation.*

Summary of Statement of Significance

- *The wider historic landscape character of this landscape is extremely coherent but 19th and 20th century fieldscapes have tended to obscure earlier landscape.*
- *Surviving blocks of open grassland are significant both as a historic landscape type and due to the archaeological earthworks they contain.*
- *The evidential value of prehistoric and roman archaeology is high, many of these sites being scheduled ancient monuments but the illustrative value is low as many of these sites survive only as crop marks.*
- *The Ebble valley is significant because it can be linked to the sustained patterned of land holdings deriving from the chalk hundred.*

Forces for Change

- Changes in Agriculture and Farming
- Changes in Climate
- Changes in Land Holdings
- Changes in the Natural Environment

Summary of State of the Historic Environment

- *The coherence of this landscape is derived from the defining influence of 19th and 20th enclosure, these means that this area has a fairly robust albeit modern historic landscape character.*
- *Areas of open downland where they survive consist of a fragile and important component of the landscape.*
- *Archaeology is at threat from ploughing*

Summary of Historic Environment Actions

- *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 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 17: Improve management of historic boundaries and ensure they are retained*
- *ACTION 18: Identify key characteristics of hundreds and associated beneficial 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 10: Wooded Chalk Downland of the Cranborne Chase and Chetterwood
-  Area 12: Southern Downland Belt

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

-  Theme 2: Farms and Farming

- T3** Theme 3: Fields in the Landscape
- T8** Theme 8: Landscapes of Prehistory
- T7** Theme 7: Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration & Defence
- T9** Theme 9: Open Land
- T10** Theme 10: Routeways in the Landscape

History and Context

The area has been a focus of Prehistoric and Roman activity.

The area as it appears today is dominated by the impact of 19th and 20th century enclosure. Many of these fields were created through the process of parliamentary enclosure in the 19th century. Enclosure is the process “by which land that has formerly been owned and exploited collectively is divided into separate parcels, each owner exchanging rights in part of it” (Sandell 1971: 1). The First World War saw further woodland and scrub clearance, and large areas of open downland ploughed up for cereals. Post Second World War intensification of agriculture continued with the ploughing of slopes and elevated downland. This resulted in loss of archaeological features and, in some instances, loss of topsoil, and a decline in chalk grasslands. Some areas are now once again improving - hedgerows are being re-planted and agri-environment schemes have started to encourage animal and plant species back to the downlands.

The creation of small geometric blocks of woodland in this area began from 1800 as areas of game cover and coverts. This is linked to the increasing importance of fox hunting and shooting.

- 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 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 Heritages preliminary characterisation of historic farmsteads.

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

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

The long barrows of the Wylve Valley and the Corton long barrow, in particular, are discussed in a paper in the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* 97: 63-67 from 2004.

Excavations of a round barrow in the parish of Sutton Veny have been published by Johnson in 1980 *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* 72/73: 29-50.

Wiltshire Parliamentary enclosures are discussed in *Abstracts of Wiltshire Inclosure Awards* published by the Wiltshire Record Society in 1971.

B10

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

- The ancient parishes run north south across the valley sides of the Wylve, taking in a thin slice of valley bottom side and downland. In the Post Medieval period the upper Wylve was under the influence of the Hungerfords.

- The Wylde 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 6th century AD.
- In contrast ancient parishes in the Ebbel Valley 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.
- 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 Earl of Pembroke at the Dissolution. This long duree is visible in the landscape through the great avenues established by the Earls of Pembroke.

T1

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

Farms and Farming in the Landscape

- Today arable dominates on the upper sides of the chalk valleys interspersed with pockets of unimproved grassland in steeper coombes. Historically these were large scale areas of open chalk grassland, grazed by large flocks of sheep
- Farms and farm buildings did not extend into this area until the 19th century forming outfarms on the downs. One listed early 19th century set of farm buildings have been recorded in this area forming a barn, stable and cowshed, ranges on three sides of the yard with railings on the fourth side.

T2

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

Fields in the Landscape

- The two areas consist of modern 20th century blocks of fields which enclosed the former open downland. The field patterns reflect the history of
- In the Ebbel Valley blocks of 19th century enclosure also dominate which have in turn been modified in the 20th century.
- The north slope of the Wylde Valley has one area of modified pre 1800 fields
- Both areas are criss-crossed with the remains of much older field systems (Roman and Prehistoric) which 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

- There is one Medieval deer park on the southern slopes of the Ebbel Valley.

T4

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

Hunting Landscapes

- The Ebbel Valley is wholly within the outer bounds of the Cranborne Chase.

T5 See 'Hunting Landscapes' for more information on this theme.

Industry in the Landscape

- There are former small scale chalk quarries on the sides of the valleys.

T6 See 'Industry' in the Landscape for more information on this theme.

Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration and Defence

- The northern Wylve Valley sides are associated with a concentration of former military features, including the remnants of Codford Camp, and a rifle range.
- There is one small surviving camp on the edge of the AONB boundary at Knook.
- Above Codford a World War One Anzac cap badge was cut into the chalk and survives.

T7 See 'Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration & Defence' for more information on this theme.

Landscapes of Prehistory

- There is a low density scatter of Neolithic and Bronze Age findspots.
- There are a significant number of Bronze Age round barrows dispersed through the Ebble Valley.
- In contrast round barrows on the north side of the Wylve cluster above at Codford and Deptford.

T8 See 'Landscapes of Prehistory' for more information on this theme.

Late 20th Century Activity in the Landscape

- A small mobile caravan park is situated in the Ebble valley.

Open Land

- These areas were comprised of large areas of open chalk downland prior to the 19th century. The evidence for this former land use survives as place name evidence and a lack of mature woodland hedgerow.

T9 See 'Open Land' for more information on this theme.

Routeways in the Landscape

- The area north of the River Wylde is crossed by linear downland access routes including roads, tracks, bridleways and byways, which run north from the river valley. These routes are often abraded and sunken. The area is also crossed by north long distance routes, including the ancient harroway, an 18th century turnpike (a track parallel to the modern A303) and the A303 itself.
- Similarly in the Ebbel Valley there are a network of parallel north south access tracks these give access to downland to the south, the Ox Drove, and the ancient droveway known as the Salisbury Way to the north. There are very few modern roads leading north or south from the valley floor.

T10

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

Settlement in the Landscape

- Iron Age settlement on lower slopes on northern side of the Ebbel Valley.
- Settlement is extremely scarce with isolated 20th century farms and downland barns.
- There is a deserted Medieval settlement at the head of the Ebbel Valley above the level of current settlement.
- There are no Conservation Areas.

T11

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

Water in the Landscape

- N/A

T12

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

Woodland and Trees in the Landscape

- The northern side of the Wylde Valley is broken up by linear blocks of 20th century woodland plantation. Many of the hill-tops and rounded bluffs on the valley sides are capped with characteristic small copses and plantations.
- These blocks are much smaller in the Ebbel Valley and less regular. Regular occurrence of small copses, shelterbelts and avenues.
- The now fragmented beech avenue which rises from Broad Chalke to Knowlton Hill forms a valuable landscape feature within the valley, providing a 'tunnelled' lane up the hillside.

T13

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

Statement of Significance

Introduction

The area is fairly significant both in terms of the coherence of the historic landscape character, and the presence of Prehistoric earthworks. There are a medium number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and the area has a fairly strong historic and evidential value. Surviving blocks of open grassland are significant both as a historic landscape type and due to the archaeological earthworks they contain.

Coherence, Local Distinctiveness, Rarity, and Time Depth

The wider historic landscape character of this area is extremely coherent; this includes large scale modern 20th century blocks of fields with some 19th century fieldscapes. These are visually dominant and distinctive to chalk downland landscapes which have obscured earlier traces of land uses. The historic patterns of routeways are much more prominent.

Traces of former land uses are confined to pockets of surviving open chalk grassland. Time depth in the wider landscape is mainly displayed where Prehistoric archaeological earthworks are visible in the landscape especially in the form of round barrows, however many of the known sites have only been recorded as earthworks.

Typical surviving components of the area

- Significant number of Bronze Age round barrows.
- Ancient parish boundaries.
- Evidence for sustained patterns of land holdings.
- Modern 20th century blocks of fields with some 19th century fieldscapes.
- Medieval deer park.
- Small scale chalk quarries.
- Concentration of former military features.
- Pockets of surviving chalk downland.
- Linear downland access routes.
- Settlement is extremely scarce with isolated 20th century farms and downland barns.
- Linear blocks of 20th century woodland plantation.

Nationally Protected Heritage



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

There are a medium number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (32) compared with other areas, this number is quite low in relation to the size of the area. The SAMs include Neolithic long barrows and a henge, Bronze Age round barrows, stretches of Roman roads, Prehistoric settlement and earthworks.

There are a 24 listed buildings but the majority of these are mileposts and boundary stones with a few historic farm buildings. There is one Grade I listed manor house and one Grade II* listed church.

There are no registered parks and gardens.

There are no Conservation Areas.

Archaeological Fieldwork in the AONB



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

- On the north slope of the Wylde Valley William Cunnington (1754-1810) and his patron Richard Colt Hoare, who lived at Stourhead in Wiltshire, excavated many barrows systematically, recording their findings and using stratigraphy to distinguish between primary and secondary burials.

Evidential Value

There has been no systematic study of archaeological fieldwork in this area. Where information is available the county Historical Environment Records amongst other sources indicate features including:

- Archaeological sites:
 - Large numbers of Bronze Age round barrows.
 - Roman trackways on the southern edge of the Ebbel Valley.
 - Iron Age and Roman settlements within enclosure and burials.
 - Early Medieval settlements surviving as earthworks adjacent to existing settlements.
 - Late Medieval settlements surviving as earthworks adjacent to existing settlements.
 - Site of a Medieval lodge in the north of the Ebbel Valley.
 - Large numbers of undated circular features, linear features and enclosures.
 - Extensive undated field systems and lynchets.

In general the majority of these sites have been recorded as crop marks in ploughed fields. Earthworks tend to survive on the edge of settlements or where chalk grassland survives on the side of steeper coombes.

- There are 69 find spots, the majority of these are Prehistoric flint tools.
- Historic droveways.
- Sparse architectural record including:
 - Manor houses.
 - Farmhouses and farm buildings.
 - Milestone and mileposts.

The key to the unique historic landscape character of the area is the history of 19th century and later enclosure which dominates the landscape, interspersed with regular woodland blocks, juxtaposed with surviving pockets of open chalk downland. The Ebble Valley can be linked to the sustained patterned of land holdings deriving from the chalk hundred.

Historical Value

Illustrative Value

Prehistoric monuments, field systems and settlement sites existing as visible earthworks.

The modern picture of extensive arable holdings on former downland areas interspersed with remnant grasslands still used as grazing can be used to illustrate the enclosure of land through Parliamentary acts and informal enclosure.

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.

The expansion of arable land across downland areas can be used to illustrate the expansion of agriculture during the 19th and 20th Century.

Chalk Cap Badges at Fovant provide a visible link to the First World War.

Associative Value

The Earls of Pembroke have had a major landscape influence on the area.

Aesthetic Value

The aesthetic value of the area is derived from the homogenous imposition of large scale arable fields on the landscape juxtaposed with pockets of much older land use, including pockets of ancient chalk grassland and Prehistoric and Roman field systems and strip lynchets.

Communal Value

The Chalk Cap Badges at Fovant has important meaning for the local community.

State of the Historic Environment

Introduction

The coherence of this landscape is derived from the defining influence of 19th and 20th enclosure; this means that this area has a fairly robust albeit recent historic landscape character. This has however obscured earlier land traces. Areas of open downland, where they survive, consist of a fragile and important component of the landscape.

Current Knowledge

Large numbers of archaeological monuments are known in this area but there has not been a systematic assessment of aerial photographs of the area and it is therefore likely that other features remain to be discovered. In addition many of the known features remain undated.

In many instances SMR and HER records are documented as points and therefore do not give the wider picture, such as the extent of field systems.

There have not been any systematic surveys of the features associated with ancient county boundaries and ancient parish boundaries, or any studies of their interrelationships.

Building records for the area are sparse, especially in relation to the character of historic farmsteads.

The AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation has revealed the character of the wider historic landscape.

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

Sixteen of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the area are at high risk. The SAMs in this area are under threat from scrub and tree growth, arable clipping and ploughing (English Heritage at Risk Register 2009). This is indicative of the risk to the wider known archaeological record.

Loss and Condition

Over the last 150 years there has been considerable boundary gain through the imposition of a regular grid of fields on the landscape in the 20th century in the Wylve Valley and in the 19th and 20th century in the Ebble Valley.

There has, therefore, been a considerable loss of open chalk downland as these fields were converted to arable. This has also resulted in a loss of extant archaeological earthworks during this period so that many archaeological features are now only visible as crop marks.

Pockets of chalk downland survive and these are associated with extant archaeological monuments.

Over the last 100 years the amount of woodland has increased in the form of angular plantations. This contrasts with the landscape scale enhancements made in the Ebble Valley, including large beech avenues which survive but are no longer managed as a coherent whole.

Coherence

This landscape is extremely homogenous in character and the present day historic landscape character, being relatively recent, is very coherent. However it obscures earlier features in the places where pockets of open chalk grassland survive, archaeological monuments and sites are much more visible.

The wooded aspects of the landscape including large beech avenues in the Ebble valley remain striking elements in the area.



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

Forces for Change

Overview sensitivity of the landscape area to accommodate change

The characteristic open, expansive qualities of these landscapes make them highly sensitive to most forms of development and land management changes, as the introduction of new characteristics into the landscapes would be readily perceptible in most views. The slopes and combs are particularly sensitive to landscape change due to their relatively open character. The sensitivity of this area is moderately-high.

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. Archaeological monuments on surviving grassland need carefully planned grazing regimes if they are to remain free of scrub.
- 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 change appearance of landscape, and result in further removal of field boundaries.
- Major changes to the way in which fields are managed and used, increased mechanisation has the potential to lead to the need for larger agricultural buildings served by larger machinery, increased redundancy, and conversion of historic farm buildings.

Theme 2: Climate Change

- Construction of new renewable energy infrastructure, including wind turbines. Wind turbines and wind farms could, if insensitively located, compromise significant landscapes, the visual settling of important sites and buildings, or the integrity of the wider historic environment.
- New biomass crops may pose a risk to buried archaeology or radically change the appearance of the wider historic landscape character.

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.

Theme 5: Natural Environment

- Increased levels of soil erosion have potential for major erosion of important archaeological sites. Loss or impoverishment of soil will affect viability of agricultural businesses, with knock-on affect on patterns of agricultural exploitation and thus on historic landscape character.
- Increased water extraction has potential impact on buried archaeological remains and, in particular, those that are currently waterlogged.
- 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

- 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.



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

- Loss or damage to buried archaeology through ploughing.
- Further loss of remnant chalk grassland.
- Potential loss of historic farm buildings not in active management.
- Erosion of landscape scale enhancements of the chalk hundred through lack of coherent management.

Historic Environment Actions



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

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

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



Version 1 December 2010. Written by Emma Rouse, HEAP Officer
© Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB

All photographs copyright AONB office; Nick Smith; Tracy Rich & Carolyn White
All Map content property of the AONB Office
All base mapping with the permission of the Ordnance Survey
© Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved (100049050) 2010.

Background	B1	Introducing the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Historic Environment Action Plans
	B2	Description of the Archaeology of the AONB by Time Period
	B3	History of Archaeological Discovery
	B4	Land Use
	B5	Local Distinctiveness
	B6	People in the Landscape
	B7	Major Historical Events, Trends and Fashions
	B8	Designated Heritage Assets
	B9	Full List of Historic Environment Actions
	B10	References and Glossary
Area	A1	Longleat to Penselwood Hills and Kilmington Common
	A2	Sutton Veny, Cold Kitchen Hill and Zeals Knoll
	A3	Chalk River Valleys
	A4	Northern Wylde and Ebbel Valley Sides
	A5	West Wiltshire Downs
	A6	Great Ridge and Grovelly Woods
	A7	Fovant Terrace and the Area Between Chalbury and Woodlands
	A8	Chalk Escarpments
	A9	Vale of Wardour
	A10	Wooded Chalk Downland of the Cranborne Chase and Chetterwood
	A11	Downland Hills
	A12	Southern Downland Belt
Theme	T1	Ancient Boundaries and Land Ownership
	T2	Farms and Farming
	T3	Fields in the Landscape
	T4	Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape
	T5	Hunting Landscapes
	T6	Industry in the Landscape
	T7	Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration & Defence
	T8	Landscapes of Prehistory
	T9	Open Land
	T10	Routeways in the Landscape
	T11	Settlement in the Landscape
	T12	Water in the Landscape
	T13	Woodland and Trees in the Landscape
	T14	Historic Features of Local Value
Supplementary	S1	Planning and Historic Landscape Character: A Guide for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB
	S2	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
Method	M1	Creating Historic Environment Action Plans for Protected Landscapes
	M2	Creating and Describing Historic Environment Areas
	M3	Creating and Describing Historic Environment Theme

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