



Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



# Historic Environment Action Plans

Area 6: Great Ridge and  
Grovely Woods





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

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

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

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

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



**Background** - Provides an introduction to the AONB Historic Environment Action Plans and provides background information on the history and archaeology of the landscape **(B1 to B10)**



**Area** - Summarises key characteristics of discrete geographical areas within the AONB, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of each area and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance its characteristics **(A1 to A12)**



**Theme** - Summarises key characteristics of historic environment themes, each document then sets out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of each theme and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance its characteristics **(T1 to T14)**



**Supplementary** - A series of documents which explore supplementary issues of relevance to the Historic Environment Action Plans **(S1 to S2)**

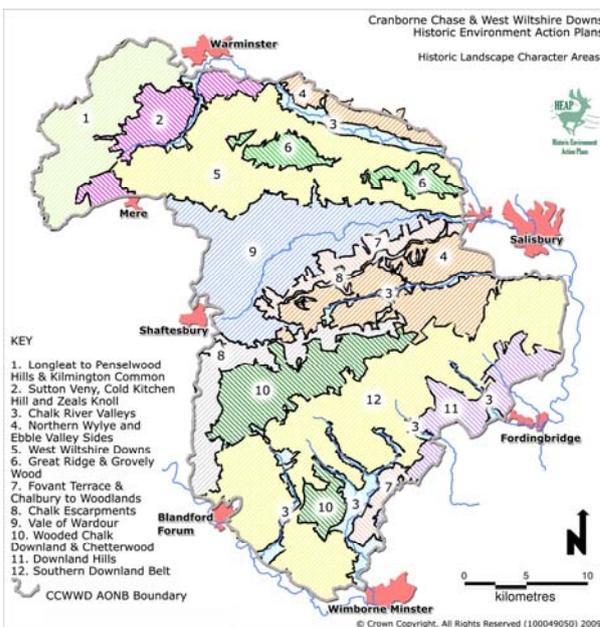


**Method** - Introduces the methodology behind the production of the Historic Environment Action Plans **(M1 to M3)**

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**Introducing the Historic Landscape Character Areas**



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

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

The following descriptions aim to provide an overview of each area

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



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

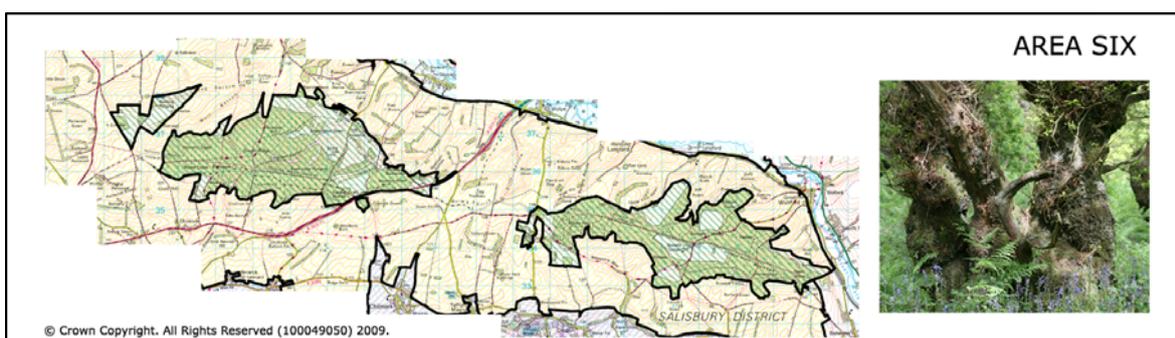
**Location, Geology, Land Use and Topography**

The woodlands of Great Ridge and Grovely Woods are located running east west along the top of the ridge of the West Wiltshire Downs from northwest of Wilton to the northeast of Higher Pertwood. They form two extensive areas of woodland cover. The

underlying geology is chalk but the woodlands are found on the clay with flints which lies above the chalk and caps the ridgeline. Both Grovely Wood and Great Ridge are a mosaic of deciduous, coniferous and mixed woodland. This Historic Landscape Character Area is surrounded by Area 5 Chalk Downland a distinctively open arable landscape once a large expanse of grazed chalk downland.

A5

## Location Map



## Summary

### Summary of Key Characteristics

- *The ancient woodlands of Grovely and Great Ridge, marked by a high occurrence of conifer plantations.*
- *Roman road crossing east west across the woodland*
- *Woodland divided into blocks by woodland rides and grid like forestry tracks.*
- *Areas of historic woodland clearance.*
- *Iron Age and Romano British earthworks on the woodland fringe.*
- *Medieval hunting forest of Grovely and the ancient parish boundary of Grovely.*
- *Continuity of land holding in Grovely Wood.*

### Summary of Statement of Significance

- *The area is highly significant in terms of the coherence of the historic landscape character and visible time depth present in the landscape.*
- *There are only a few known scheduled ancient monuments but these areas of woodland have high potential evidential value as they have never been surveyed.*
- *The woodlands themselves have a high evidential value in terms of providing information on past patterns of woodland management.*

**Summary of Forces for Change**

- *Changes in Woodland*
- *Changes in Agriculture and Farming*
- *Changes in Climate*

**Summary of State of the Historic Environment**

- *This is a very coherent historic landscape which has undergone some loss in the last 100 years.*
- *The biggest threat to this area is through a lack of understanding and knowledge of the extent of archaeological features concealed within the woodland and of the importance of the components of the woodlands itself.*

**Summary of Historic Environment Actions**

- *ACTION 3: Identify and record components of historic highways*
- *ACTION 7: Record information on hazel underwood trade*
- *ACTION 8: Increase knowledge of woodland archaeology in the AONB*
- *ACTION 9: Gain greater understanding of the components of the Medieval hunting areas of the AONB.*
- *ACTION 10: Gain greater understanding of historic farm buildings and farmsteads*
- *ACTION 11: Enhance appreciation of the Prehistoric archaeology of the area*
- *ACTION 12: Widen knowledge of ways and means of maintaining historic farm buildings*
- *ACTION 14: Increase understanding of extensive woodland not part of former Medieval hunting areas*
- *ACTION 15: Increase understanding of Medieval landscape elements of the AONB by academics, teachers and public.*
- *ACTION 16: Make more widely available enhanced and targeted information on managing archaeology in woodland.*
- *ACTION 17: Improve management of historic boundaries and ensure they are retained*

## 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 5: West Wiltshire Downs

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

 Theme 5: Hunting Landscapes

 Theme 8: Landscapes of Prehistory

 Theme 13: Woodland and Trees in the Landscape

## History and Context

The royal hunting forest at Grovely is mentioned by name in Domesday. It is situated at the crest of the West Wiltshire Downs upon a chalk plateau capped with clay with flints. According to the Victoria County History of Wiltshire at its greatest geographical extent in the 13<sup>th</sup> century the royal forest covered the whole of the modern day extent of Grovely Wood and much of the surrounding parishes. However, a perambulation of the boundary in AD 1300 fixed the western boundary as running north east from Burcombe to near Little Langford, thus excluding the western side of the modern extent of Grovely Forest. By AD 1600 the forest comprised an area of fourteen coppices corresponding to the former extraparochial district of Grovely Wood (now part of Barford St Martin). It is this area which was therefore most influenced by forest law, and was controlled by the Earls of Pembrokes at Wilton throughout the Post Medieval period. By about AD 1650 Grovely had been disafforested.

The forest of Grovely is also associated with another great area of woodland to the east called Great Ridge. Unlike all the other ancient forest in the AONB this was never part of a Medieval hunting area, and the reason for this and the survival of the woodland without the protection afforded by the hunting rights, warrants further attention.

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

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

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

## Key Secondary Sources

The main source of detail on the historic landscape is the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation report available from [www.historiclandscape.co.uk](http://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. The Victoria County History also contains a description of Grovelly Forest.

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).

**B10** A full list of References is provided in *Background Paper 10*.

## Landscape Scale Characteristics and components

### Ancient Boundaries and Land Ownership

- The greater extent of Grovelly Wood was within one ancient parish. This parish boundary has never been surveyed.
- Influence of Shaftesbury Abbey pre reformation, and the Earls of Pembroke post reformation, who owned Grovelly Wood.
- The village of Great Wishford still celebrate Oak Apple Day on May 29<sup>th</sup> an ancient custom where the people of the village enforce their rights of estover (gathering dead wood) in Grovelly Wood
- The spine of Great Ridge marks the boundary between several ancient parishes which runs through the woodland.

**T1** See 'Ancient Boundaries and Landownership' for more information on this theme

### Fields in the Landscape

- On the edges of the woodland aerial photographs have identified extensive areas of ancient field systems these probably continue into the woodland.
- There are several large open spaces in Grovely which were created prior to AD 1750.
- Great Ridge and Grovely Wood feature 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> fields around their edges which enclosed formerly open downland.

**T3** See 'Fields in the Landscape' for more information on this theme.

### Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape

- There is evidence for a former Medieval deer park in both Grovely and Great Ridge but the archaeological evidence for these is uncertain.
- The area surrounding the lodge in Grovely has undergone landscape enhancement including the planting of a great avenue of trees down the central ride.

**T4** See 'Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape' for more information on this theme.

### Hunting Landscapes

- Grovely Wood is a former Medieval hunting forest.

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

### Industry in the Landscape

- N/A

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

### Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration & Defence

- Local reports of World War One archaeology associated with Grovely Wood.

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

### Landscapes of Prehistory

- High density of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age findspots in Grovely Wood and on the eastern edge of Great Ridge.

- Iron Age and Romano British settlements and hillfort associated with edge of woodland.
- Cluster of Bronze Age round barrows on edge of forest.

T8

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

### Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Activity in the Landscape

- N/A

### Open Land

- Historically woodland surrounded by vast areas of open downland.

T9

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

### Routeways in the Landscape

- Both woods are crisscrossed by a grid of forestry tracks.
- Grovely Wood has a great avenue of tree forming a drive along its east west axis is a bridleway along its entire length.
- Eastern edge of Great Ridge clipped by the A303, a former turnpike road. Listed milestones survive charting this former history.
- Both woods are crossed east west by a Roman road though this does not form a public Right of Way. The woods are crossed north south at irregular angles by access routes leading across the downland to the south and north into the Wylve Valley.
- Grovely is bounded to the south and north by several ancient droveways.

T10

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

### Settlement in the Landscape

- Focus for settlement in Iron Age and Romano-British periods, large scale earthworks which feature Banjo Enclosures are present, e.g. Stockton.
- There is no settlement on Great Ridge. Grovely Wood is associated with little settlement with the exception of isolated farms and lodges.

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

- Grovely Wood and Great Ridge has a high occurrence of conifer plantations.
- Grovely Wood and Great Ridge are two extensive areas of woodland. associated with elevated plateaux where the chalk is capped by clay-with-flints. Both were present prior to 1750 and were part of the Medieval landscape along with associated open habitats. They are now mosaics of deciduous, coniferous and mixed woodland with fragments of pre 1750 woodland around their edges. Twentieth century planting with coniferous blocks inside these woodlands replaced the oak – ash stands and has resulted in the coniferous canopy standing above the broadleaf canopy, altering the skyline, hardening it against the cloudscapes and removing the seasonal changes that occur with a deciduous treeline.
- Ancient trees are very common and the Woodland Trust’s ancient tree hunt has recorded a large concentration of ancient trees in Grovely wood.



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

## Statement of Significance

### Introduction

The area is highly significant in terms of the coherence of the historic landscape character and visible time depth present in the landscape. This is especially the case with Grovely Wood and its association with the former Medieval hunting forest. Although there are only a few known Scheduled Ancient Monuments these areas of woodland have high potential evidential value as they have never been surveyed.

### Coherence, Local Distinctiveness, Rarity, and Time Depth

The wider historic landscape character of this area is extremely coherent and homogenous forming two areas of ancient woodland associated with historic routeways. Grovely Wood in particular is local distinctive due to it forming the core of a Medieval hunting forest.

Time depth in the wider landscape is displayed where ancient trees survive and have not been replaced by modern plantation and where earthworks can be traced in the woodlands.

### Typical surviving components of the area

- Archaeological earthworks in woodland.
- Ancient woodland alongside modern plantations.
- Sparse buildings record.
- Ancient routeways including landscape parks.
- Former Medieval hunting forest.

## Nationally Protected Heritage



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

There are only a few Scheduled Ancient Monuments (7) within the woodland areas. These comprise earthwork enclosures and linear ditches from a range of periods.

There are 3 Grade II listed buildings. These are a lodge associated with the former hunting rights of Grovely Forest and boundary stones associated with the turnpikes.

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.

Grims Ditch has been the subject of archaeological enquiry.

## Evidential Value

There has been no systematic programme of archaeological fieldwork in this area and many sites may lay undiscovered in the woodland which comprises the core of the area.

Where information is available the county Historical Environment Records amongst other sources indicate features including:

- Archaeological sites such as:
  - Several Bronze Age round barrows.
  - Iron Age and Roman settlements on the edge of the woodland.
  - Roman temple.
  - Linear dykes including Grims Ditch.
  - Roman road.
  - Undated circular features and enclosures.
  - Undated extensive field systems running into the woodland.

The majority of these sites survive as extant earthworks.

- Living archaeology forming a great swathe of veteran woodland across the core of the West Wiltshire Downs.
- Ancient routeways including droveways.
- There are 54 find spots the majority of these are Prehistoric flint tools with some Roman finds.

The key to the unique historic landscape character of the area is the history and legacy of the Grovely Forest. The key attribute of this area in the Medieval period was its status as a hunting landscape. It has also helped preserve the other ancient historic landscape characteristics of this area, discussed in typical surviving components, including ancient trees and woodland.

### **Historical Value**

#### *Illustrative Value*

Areas of surviving ancient woodland can be used to show past patterns of woodland management.

The later survival of ancient rights in this area manifests itself culturally in Great Wishfords annual Oak Apple Day on 29<sup>th</sup> May.

#### *Associative Value*

The Earls of Pembroke controlled Grovely Wood throughout the Post Medieval period.

### **Aesthetic Value**

The aesthetic value of the area is derived from the ancient trees and archaeological features visible in the woodland.

### **Communal Value**

Grovely Wood in particular is a focus for walking and is associated with the Great Wishford Oak Apple Day Festival.

## **State of the Historic Environment**

### **Introduction**

This area remains a very coherent historic landscape. The greatest threat to this area is through lack of knowledge and understanding.

### **Current Knowledge**

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

- When the existing known archaeological sites are plotted on a map, it can be seen that there is a cluster of sites along the edges of woodland areas but an obvious lack of information on sites within the woodland.
- There is a lack of information on Post Medieval historic management of woodland e.g. saw pits and industrial activity.
- The woodlands in particular may be hiding evidence of the chronology and form of agricultural land use as they expanded and contracted over the centuries.

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

- It is not clear what aspects of the Medieval landscape of the Medieval Grovely forest survive, including boundaries, traces of woodland management, settlements, and deer parks.
- More research could be undertaken on historical features with biodiversity importance, such as ancient trees and unimproved grassland.
- The relationship between Grovely Forest and Great Ridge is poorly understood.

The area is associated with a distinctive 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

Over half of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments are at high risk (4). The majority of SAMs in this area are under threat from tree cover and past woodland planting (English Heritage at Risk Register 2009). This is indicative of the risk to the wider known archaeological record.

### Loss and Condition

In the last 200 years, 200 hectares of veteran woodland has been lost from the north of Grovely Forest and the far west of Great Ridge. There has also been a shift in the composition of woodland in the area with the introduction of greater numbers of conifers. The woodland in the area is in active management but some archaeological earthworks are under threat from scrub encroachment.

### Coherence

The characters of these woodlands are very coherent including the landscape enhancements in Grovely Wood. However important archaeological sites and features in the area are not so easily appreciated, being obscured by trees.



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

### Forces for Change

#### *Overview of the sensitivities of the landscape area to change*

The extensive areas of ancient woodland of Grovely Wood and Great Ridge contrast markedly with the open chalk downland landscapes surrounding them. These areas are highly sensitive to change.

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: Agricultural 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.

#### Theme 2: Climate Change

- Some historically authentic tree plantings may not be viable by the time they reach maturity.
- An increased reliance on wood fuel might provide opportunities for the more active management of the woodland, thereby helping to protect archaeological remains; conversely increased woodland exploitation could intensify use of heavy machinery and increase woodland planting, providing a threat.

#### Theme 8: Woodland in the Landscape

- Woodland in the future may be more intensively managed which may have a positive impact on known archaeological and historic features but a negative impact on areas where such features survive but have not been identified. New woodland can reinforce the pattern of historic landscape if its location is carefully guided.



*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 unknown archaeological and historical features in woodlands through forestry work and scrub encroachment.
- Lack of appreciation of the landscape scale legacy of Grovely Forest and the Medieval and earlier components of this landscape.
- Lack of understanding of the place of Great Ridge in the wider landscape history of the AONB.

## Historic Environment Actions



See Background paper 9 for a full list of Historic Environment Actions.

### **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 droeways of the AONB as these represent some of the oldest routeways and are served by a good Rights of Way network. One possible Mechanism could be through the creation of self-guided trails.

### **ACTION 7: Record information on hazel underwood trade**

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

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

**ACTION 8: Increase knowledge of woodland archaeology in the AONB**

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

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

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

**The Threat and the Opportunity** - The Historic Environment Action Plans have identified the Medieval hunting forests of the AONB (Cranborne Chase, Grovely Forest and Selwood Forest) as one of the most important components of the historic landscape of the AONB. However although the history of these areas has been studied their physical archaeological and historical components have not received similar attention. The role of the Medieval hunting areas, combined with the ecclesiastical powers who dominated land ownership within the AONB, and the relationship to land use and feudal society is poorly understood.

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

**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 14: Increase understanding of extensive woodland not part of former Medieval hunting areas**

**The Threat and the Opportunity** - Several large woodlands in the AONB, including Great Ridge, are notable for not forming the core of a Medieval hunting forest. This means that their development and history, which is likely to have been different from that of woodland in the hunting grounds, is not very well understood.

**The Potential Mechanism** - This action will target these areas and historical and archaeological investigations will provide the context to their key archaeological and historical features; investigate the likely reasons why they were not incorporated into a Medieval hunting landscape; and establish how their medieval and later histories may have differed from the hunting landscape woodlands.

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

**The Threat and the Opportunity** - The Historic Environment Action Plan Steering Group felt that there was a lack of simple readily available information targeted at woodland owners to help them more effectively manage the heritage assets in their woodland. The use of the heavy machinery involved in woodland management and harvesting can be very damaging to archaeological remains and lack of awareness of issues amongst forestry operatives has so far been a major stumbling block.

**The Potential Mechanism** – Invest effort in improving working relationships between forestry operatives, managers and archaeologists. An information base could be created for forestry operatives to help them better conserve and enhance the archaeology of woodlands, including information on protected heritage, good practice, information sources and heritage grant schemes for woodland. This could be promoted through a training day.

**ACTION 17: Improve management of historic 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.



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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	<b>Great Ridge and Grovelly Woods</b>
	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](http://www.historiclandscape.co.uk)

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



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