

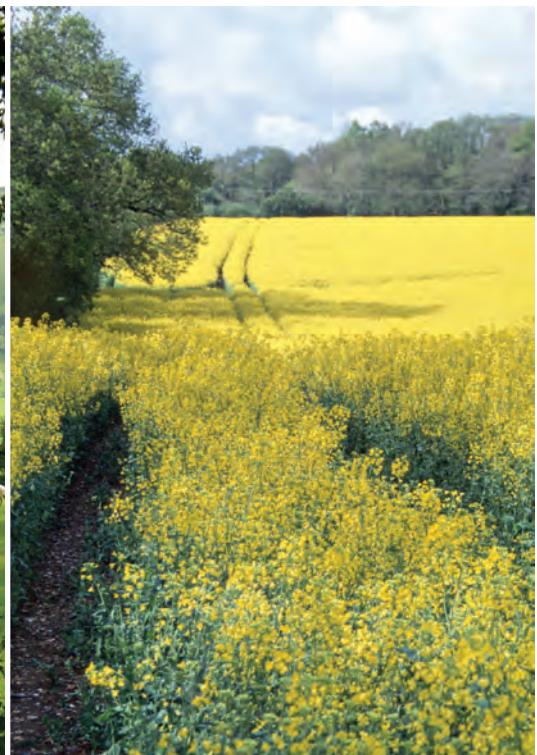


Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



# Historic Environment Action Plans

Area 9: Vale of Wardour





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](#))

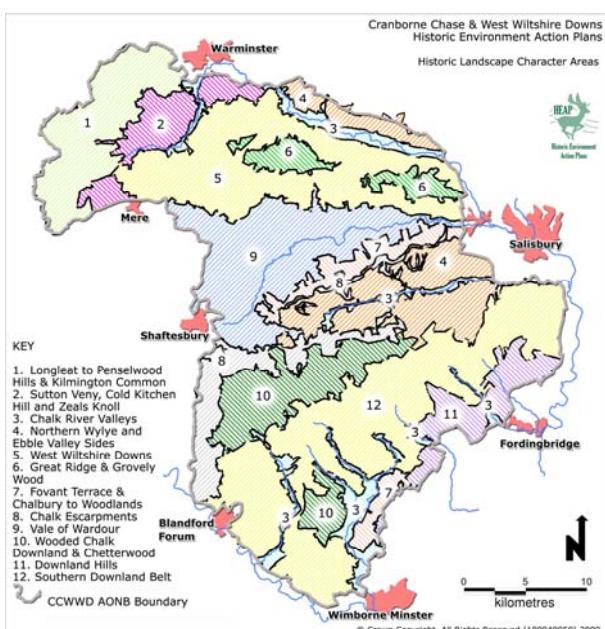


**Method** - Introduces the methodology behind the production of the Historic Environment Action Plans ([M1 to M3](#))

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## Introducing the Historic Landscape Character Areas



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

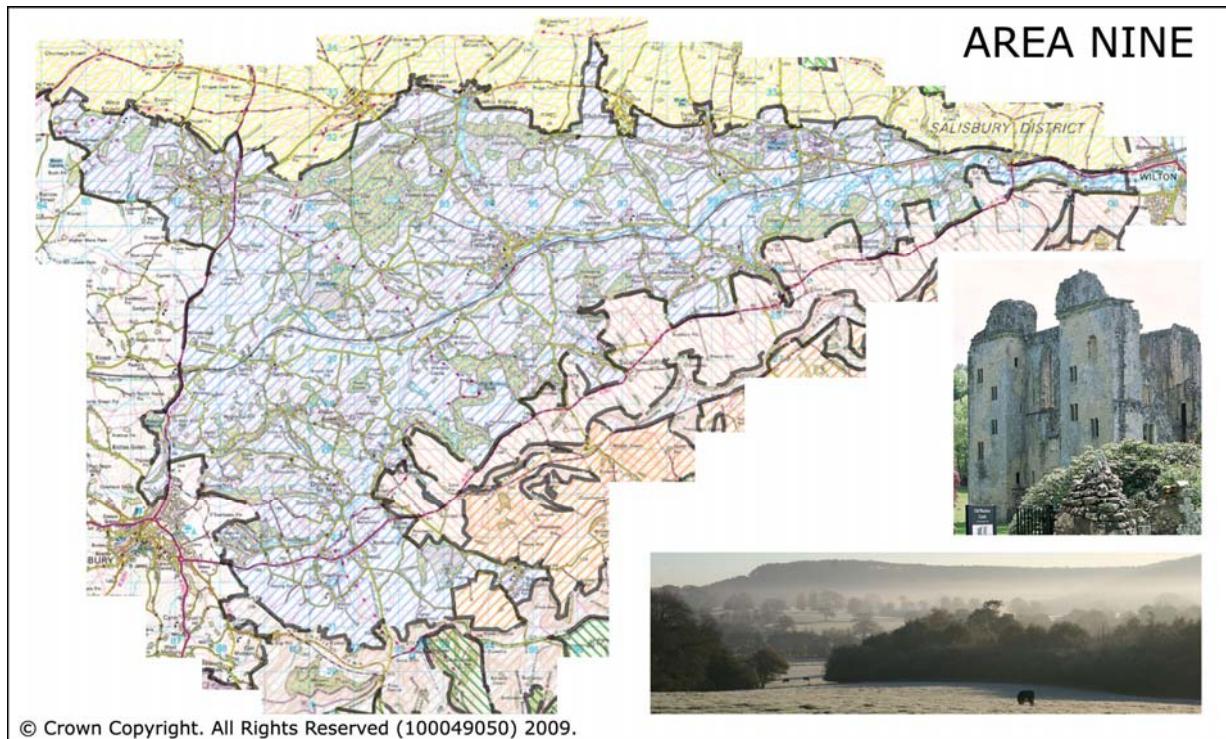
## Location, Geology, Land Use and Topography

There are three areas which all form the steep escarpment edges of chalk downland:

Area 9 comprises the Vale of Wardour which occupies a central location in the area. It is bounded by the West Wiltshire Downs to the north (see Area 4A) and the chalk escarpments to the south (see Area 8A and 8B). The vale of Wardour is a rolling clay valley defined by a mix of pasture and arable crops which contrasts markedly with the land to the north and south. The River Nadder flows west to east across the area towards the Avon and contradicts the landform which becomes wider and less narrow to the west. The edges

of the Vale of Wardour are formed of an undulating band of greensand hills which are clothed in woodland in places with a mosaic of permanent pasture and woodland in others.

## Location Map



## Summary

### Summary of Key Characteristics

- This area is characterised by a mixed pattern of Historic Landscape Character Types which are arranged in a mosaic across the area.
- This includes historic fields dating to before 1800.
- Common land survives around Semley and other common land to the south has scrubbed up.
- There is an ancient and dense pattern of routeways.
- The ruins of Wardour Castle are an important tourist attraction.
- There are many historic parks and gardens as well as former deer parks.
- The Nadder has relic water meadows along its length.
- The area is crossed by the railway.
- Stone quarries are an important historic feature.

## Summary of Statement of Significance

- *The area is highly significant both in terms of the strength of the historic landscape character, the visibility of time depth in the landscape and the richness of the built heritage.*
- *Significant archaeological features including Old Wardour Castle, relic water meadows and stone quarries.*
- *There are large numbers of nationally important historic features including 5 Grade I Listed Buildings, and Grade II\* Historic Parks and Gardens.*
- *Overall, The area has a very high evidential value*
- *There is a significant historical value especially in terms of illustrating past events.*
- *There is also a strong communal value.*

## Summary of Forces for Change

- *Changes in Agriculture and Farming*
- *Changes in Climate*
- *Changes in Industry*
- *Changes in Land Holdings*
- *Changes in Natural Environment*
- *Changes in Recreation and Tourism*
- *Changes in Settlement and Infrastructure Development*

## Summary of State of the Historic Environment

- *Key parts of this distinctive historic landscape have declined including the loss of the coherence of field patterns and loss of woodland*
- *Despite this the area as a whole remains a strong and coherent landscape*
- *Particular features remain under threat including some archaeological sites, particular classes of historic buildings and some historic parks and gardens, water meadows.*
- *Erosion of the character of historic settlements not subject to Conservation Areas or lacking Conservation Area Appraisals.*
- *There are further threats arising from the lack of information especially of Medieval and Post-Medieval archaeology and their associated landscapes.*

## 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 10: Gain greater understanding of historic farm buildings and farmsteads
- ACTION 11: Enhance appreciation of the Prehistoric archaeology of the area
- ACTION 12: Widen knowledge of ways and means of maintaining historic farm buildings
- ACTION 15: Increase understanding of Medieval landscape elements of the AONB by academics, teachers and public.
- ACTION 16: Make more widely available enhanced and targeted information on managing archaeology in woodland.
- ACTION 17: Improve management of historic boundaries and ensure they are retained
- ACTION 19: Coordinate advice on historic parks and gardens management
- 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 adjacent to this area are:



Area 4: Northern Wylye and Ebble Valley Sides

Area 5: West Wiltshire Downs

Area 7: Parliamentary Patterns on the Fovant Terrace and between Chisbury and Woodlands

Area 8: Chalk Escarpments

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



Theme 2: Farms and Farming

Theme 3: Fields in the Landscape

Theme 4: Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape

Theme 6: Industry in the Landscape

Theme 10: Routeways in the Landscape

Theme 11: Settlement in the Landscape

Theme 12: Water in the Landscape

Theme 13: Woodland and Trees in the Landscape

## History and Context

The intensive uses 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 utilised in prehistory. This is suggested by high densities of Neolithic and flint tools found by fieldwalking.

The main settlement in the valley was occupied by the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. The pattern of Medieval settlement through the vale demonstrates that this area was being intensively exploited by this period, marked by the deserted Medieval settlements in the valley. During the period Monsatic Houses, including Shaftesbury Abbey, had major landholdings in the area. Post dissolution newly ennobled families came to prominence. This includes the Barons Arundells of Wardour (created in 1605) important landowners in the area, who are partly notable for their involvement in the English Civil War and there castle at Wardour was mined and irreparably damaged under Parliamentary siege in 1644.

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. The area is marked by early enclosure, partly cleared from woodland in the west. Pasture still dominates here although the amount of arable land has increased during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Between 1600 and 1900 landowners expressed their status and wealth through the construction of great houses, often associated with formally designed gardens and landscapes. The Vale of Wardour was no exception to this trend with several striking designed landscapes being created.

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 valley was further encouraged by the industrial revolution as water mills were increasingly harnessed to other forms of production. The coming of the railways opened up new markets for these goods, encouraging further production.

Another way the chalk river valleys were exploited was for stone, and historically the area was dotted with small quarries extracting Chilmark Stone.

B2

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

B6

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

B7

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

## Key Secondary Sources

The AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation is the main source of information on the historic landscape of the AONB and is available at [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 Heritage's preliminary characterisation of historic farmsteads.

The Wiltshire Community Website 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 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 National Trust has produced a regional archaeological strategy 2008-2011 which includes Dinton Park.

**A9****Historic Environment  
Action Plans**

The evidence for the transition from Roman to Saxon influence is looked at in a series of papers in *Roman Wiltshire and After: Papers in Honour of Ken Annable* (2001) edited by P. Ellis and published by the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.

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.

**B10**

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

## Landscape Scale Characteristics and Components

### Ancient Boundaries and Land Ownership

- The majority of this area was within the Dunworth Hundred.
- The influence of the estates on this area is very notable. This includes ecclesiastical landowners such as Shaftesbury and Wilton Abbey in the Medieval period. This legacy is represented by the great tithe barn at Tisbury and the remains of a Knights Templar preceptory at Ansty.
- Post reformation major magnates such as the Lords Arundell, Earls of Pembroke and the Beckfords controlled much of the area and this legacy is legible by the influence of 'estate style' and the large numbers of grand houses and parks.
- The ancient parishes in the area are irregular and small. They are more rectangular on the northern side.
- Teffont marks the western boundary of Saxon influence in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.

**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, interspersed with small arable fields. Livestock farming, and in particular dairy, has been declining over recent years.
- Historic farmsteads are spread through the area occurring both on the edge of historic settlement and in more isolated locations.
- They reflect the mixed farming of the area with threshing and combination barns, cattle housing, cartsheds and stables seen on most farms. Loose courtyards and regular L-shaped plans predominate, with some dispersed.
- There are large numbers of listed farm buildings and include the imposing 15<sup>th</sup> century rubble and limestone tithe barn at Tisbury.
- Some buildings are timber framed but local stone, including Chilmark and Greensand, was most commonly used.

**T2**

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

### Fields in the Landscape

- Some ancient fields have been mapped from aerial photographs but these are in no way the same density as on the downland areas.

**A9**

- Pre 1800 fields dominate and there is a notable pattern of small curving irregular fields interspersed with copses in the west. These fields have undergone little modification. The pre 1800 fields are interspersed with small blocks of more regular 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century fields and less regular 20<sup>th</sup> century fields.
- Water meadows are a notable feature of the valley bottom.

**T3**

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

### **Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape**

- Parkland is a notable feature, including nationally registered landscaped large scale parks such as Wardour Park, Pythouse, and Dinton Park, and small scale locally listed parks and gardens such as at Teffont Evias.
- There are traces of Medieval deer parks and Post Medieval deer parks
- All of the great houses and parks remain in private ownership apart from Phillips House in Dinton Park, which is owned by the National Trust.

**T4**

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

### **Hunting Landscapes**

- It forms the northern boundary of the Cranborne Chase, however the area to the north, outside the Chase, demonstrates little difference in historic land use suggesting on the very edge of the influence of Chase law.
- Often great concentrations of Deer Parks.

**T5**

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

### **Industry in the Landscape**

- The valley has small scale industrial features including a quarry for Chilmark stone and industrial estates. The latter often reuse brown field sites, such as former military land, brick works or railway sidings.

**T6**

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

### **Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration & Defence**

- The ruins of Wardour Castle are especially distinctive and form a tourist attraction in the area. Their ruined state is a legacy of the English Civil War.
- The military past of the valley is represented by the former military base near Chilmark and its associated transportation system.

**T7**

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

### **Landscapes of Prehistory**

- There are a low number of Prehistoric sites, notable exceptions being three Iron Age hillforts.

**A9**

- There are a few Bronze Age barrows on raised ground on the northern side.
- There is a record that the grotto at Old Wardour castle incorporated a Neolithic stone circle which was removed from another site.
- However fieldwalking has shown a high level of Prehistoric activity in the form of high densities of flint including Mesolithic and Neolithic finds. Bronze Age finds were much rarer.

**T8**

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

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

- There is a private airfield on the Compton Abbas escarpment.

### **Open Land**

- Common land survives around Semley, and other common land in the area has now become woodland.
- Some prairie fields on the northern edge of the area mark the location of formerly open downland.

**T9**

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

### **Routeways in the Landscape**

- The area is characterised by a dense network of footpaths and winding lanes, sunken holloways and green lanes.
- The area is bounded to the north by the carriage road and to the south by the A30 both of which are former turnpikes.
- A lost Roman road runs north-south through the area from Ludwell through the Donheads.
- The railway is a dominant feature running through the area which transformed the settlement.

**T10**

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

### **Settlement in the Landscape**

- The known archaeological record is dominated by Mediaeval and Post Medieval sites, including settlements (farmsteads, shrunken and deserted villages) which cluster around Tisbury, moated manor houses, and former ecclesiastical sites.
- Along the northern and southern edge of the area there is archaeological evidence for Early Medieval settlement.
- There is a dense pattern of nucleated settlement deriving from the Medieval period. This can be split into five main groupings
  1. Linear settlement below the Fovant Terrace, hidden in combes such as Ansty, Swallowcliffe and Fovant.
  2. Scattered and dispersed settlement through the Donheads.
  3. Settlement along the north of the area at the head of feeder valleys leading down to the Nadder including Teffont Magna and Fonthill Bishop.

4. The nucleated settlement of Tisbury with potentially Saxon routes. The original focus of settlement was the top of the high street and the Medieval manor to the east. This is surrounded by a network of nucleated hamlets.
  5. Pattern of common edge settlement in the area around Semley.
- New 19<sup>th</sup> century settlement, with indicative names such as Newtown infilled this pattern.
  - The major focus of settlement growth in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been focused on the village of Tisbury, which is the largest settlement in the AONB, and to a lesser extent Dinton.
  - Another distinctive feature is that the buildings are commonly constructed of Chilmark stone with clay roof tiles and thatch, but wooden framed thatched cottages are also common. The influence of the great estates on vernacular architecture is especially notable in villages such as Fonthill Gifford.
  - There are 15 Conservation Areas demonstrating the high quality of the built environment.

T11

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.
- Former watermills now comprising modern accommodation associated with former mill ponds, mill streams and wheels.
- 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

T12

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

### Woodland and Trees in the Landscape

- Ancient woodland is dispersed throughout the area and is interspersed with more recent plantations of conifers, especially along the greensand terrace along the edge of the area.
- The area around Fonthill forms a sub area with its distinctive large 19<sup>th</sup> century plantation of conifers on the Fonthill Abbey estate.
- Most of the woodland was present prior to 1750 and is either broadleaved or mixed in character.
- The edges of the Vale have seen piecemeal loss of woodland along its edges, especially in the area to the north of Semley Hill, in the area near Summerleaze, at Teffont Evias and at Hardene Wood. Woodland creation has also occurred, albeit at a much smaller scale, and mostly abutting or adjacent to existing woodlands.
- Areas of woodland vary both in terms of size and shape with larger woodland swathes occurring at the base of the Greensand Hills such as south of Fonthill Abbey Wood and at Compton and Fovant Woods. Woodland occurring to the west of the character area, on the Kimmeridge Clay geology, is generally broad leaved, smaller, more fragmented and of a loose and sinuous nature in comparison with the more regular, geometric form of woodland occurring to the east of Tisbury.

- A belt of oak woods, some of which have been converted to conifer production, occur on the greensand hills to the north of Shaftesbury spanning the AONB boundary around Motcombe and Sedgehill. They can be seen in the AONB at East and West Knoyle, Semley and the Donheads. Much of the woodland around East and West Knoyle was present prior to 1750 and has been complimented by the Woodland Trust plantation at Mackintosh-Davidson Wood. The pre-1750 woodland around Semley has been added to as the commonland has scrubbed up and formed natural woodland.
- There are hill top woodlands around Donhead St Mary, and on the slopes along the southern side of the Vale of Wardour.
- 19<sup>th</sup> century plantations around Fonthill. These woodlands are a significant part of the tree cover of this area and their comparatively recent establishment hides the fact that they were established amongst a well wooded landscape, as attested to by the presence of many ancient hedgerow trees and artefacts such as woodbanks.
- Woodlands associated with large country houses and historic parkland are also a feature, for example at Pythouse and Phillips House.
- Shelterbelts occur within this character area and large in-field trees, particularly open-grown oaks and alder along the course of the River Nadder, maintain the wooded character across the farmland.
- The Vale of Wardour and Nadder Valley holds an internationally important aggregation of ancient and veteran trees. The great oaks of Pythouse Park, the limes around Wardour, the apple and pear trees in and around the villages and the hedgerow ash along the Nadder Valley are just a few examples.

T13

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

## Statement of Significance

### Introduction

The area is highly significant both in terms of the strength of the historic landscape character, the visibility of time depth in the landscape and the richness of the built heritage. There are large numbers of listed buildings and the area 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 large areas of pre 1800 fields, ancient woodlands coupled with the coherent historic settlement pattern. These factors combine to create a strong feeling of local distinctiveness.

The settlements of the Vale of Wardour are associated with a distinctive vernacular architecture using locally available building materials and which often include the original Medieval demesne and church at their core. These are complimented by a pattern of smaller satellite settlements, including historic hamlets and new 19<sup>th</sup> century settlements. This is complemented by coherent and visually distinctive designed parkland with historic houses at their core.

Time depth in the wider landscape is highly visible due to the survival of the historic landscape characteristics described above. It is also visible in settlement form and in the built elements of the landscape due to the high survival of pre 1600 buildings and the relative lack of development in the settlements. However it has been obscured in areas in the valley bottom where water meadow systems have obliterated earlier landscape traces.

Patterns within the Prehistoric and Roman archaeological resource are generally less coherent. Prehistoric sites are rarer than in other areas, so those that are known provide significant sources of information.

### Typical Surviving Components of the Area

- The influence of the estates on this area is very notable
- Ancient parish boundaries.
- Pre 1800 fields dominate and there is a notable pattern of small curving irregular fields interspersed with copses in the west.
- Parkland is a notable feature.
- The valley has small scale industrial features.
- There are a low number of Prehistoric monuments but a high number of flint scatters.
- Common land survives around Semley, and other common land in the area has now become woodland.
- There is a dense pattern of nucleated settlement deriving from the Medieval period.
- Ancient woodland is dispersed throughout the area and is interspersed with more recent plantations of conifers.

### Nationally Protected Heritage

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

There are a very low number and density of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (10) compared with other areas, representing the long history of land use in this area having obscuring earlier traces of archaeological sites.

There are 525 listed buildings, a very high density and number compared to other areas in the AONB. These are associated with the historic settlements or estates. There are 5 Grade I listed buildings. These are a range of types including Old Wardour Castle, the arch into the park at Fonthill, and a manor house. There are 31 Grade II\* buildings comprised of churches and chapels, farmhouses and manors.

There are 4 registered park and gardens. Two Grade II\* listed 18<sup>th</sup> century landscaped parks at Fonthill and Wardour, and one Grade II listed landscape park at Dinton. There is also a Grade II listed 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced garden at Hatch House.

There are 15 Conservation Areas.

### Archaeological Fieldwork in the AONB

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

The Archaeological Field Group of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society have undertaken excavations of a possible Roman road in Donhead St Mary in 2009.

A programme of fieldwalking was undertaken in 1976 and 1978 examining all the arable fields in the Vale of Wardour by Chris Gingell, with Phil Harding.

## Evidential Value

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

- Archaeological sites:
  - Four Bronze age round barrows.
  - Three Iron Age hillforts.
  - Roman building at Donhead St Mary.
  - Roman and Early Medieval burials.
  - Several Roman cemetery's.
  - Roman and Medieval quarries.
  - Medieval ecclesiastical sites, moated manor houses and deserted villages.
  - Medieval settlements existing as earthworks near historic villages and farmsteads.
  - Undated extensive field systems.

Many of these sites exist as earthworks in the pasture found across the area.

Two hundred and four find spots related to a range of features but including prehistoric flints.

- Water meadow systems
- Quarries
- Historic parks and gardens
- Historic system of routeways and tracks
- Legacy of monastic houses and Post Medieval
- Military history of the Cold War at Chilmark
- Rich architectural history including great houses but also featuring:
  - Local vernacular architecture
  - Manor houses
  - Historic farmhouses and farm buildings
  - Other settlement features including bridges, crosses, inns and pumps
  - Historic churches, chapels and memorials

The key to the unique historic landscape character of the area is the juxtaposition between ancient woodland, pre 1800 enclosure and historic settlement.

## Historical Value

### *Illustrative Value*

Prehistoric monuments, and Iron Age hillforts existing as visible earthworks.

Places names such as Teffont can be used to illustrate the spread of Anglo-Saxon presence and culture across the landscape.

Great tithe barn and abbey remains at Tisbury can be used to illustrate the importance of the Great Monastic house between AD 1066-1536 and illustrate the dissolution of the Monasteries AD 1536-1541.

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

The large numbers of dissenting churches and chapels, and burial grounds can be used to illustrate increased religious freedom and the rise of religious dissent AD 1600-1900.

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 great houses established in the centre of parkland can be used to illustrate the way landowners expressed their status and wealth between 1600 and 1900.

Ruins of the Medieval Castle of Wardour which was mined and destroyed under Parliamentary siege in 1644 can be used to illustrate the impact of the English Civil War AD 1641-1651.

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

Evidence of 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. Other visible evidence includes the shift in settlement focus from carriage roads to railway lines which leads to the decline of Hindon and the rise of Tisbury as the major settlement in the AONB and the large numbers of quarries through the Vale of Wardour.

The lasting legacy of war graves and memorials provides a visible link to the First and Second World Wars.

The now relic stone quarries for armaments storage at RAF Chilmark and the creation of a branch railway provides a visible reminder of the impact of the Cold War.

#### **Associative Value**

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

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

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

Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) was born and grew up in East Knoyle, where his father was rector. Little survives to celebrate the birthplace of this great architect, although the store above

### Aesthetic Value

The aesthetic value of the landscape is derived from the juxtaposition between ancient land uses including ancient woodland, pre 1800 enclosure and Medieval settlement.

The designed landscapes of Wardour and Fonthill also have their value in their formal design.

### Communal Value

The villages in this area are strong vibrant communities. A snapshot of heritage which is valued by local people can be seen from available local parish plans.

Dinton Parish Plan (2006) identifies the importance of the former clay pits and greensand quarries as providing an important source of local building material. It also identifies the importance of Shaftesbury Abbey, and the Dukes of Pembroke, and William Wyndham (creator of Dinton Park) as local landowners. It also identifies Phillips House, and Dinton Park and the former Second World War and later Royal Air Force depot (closed in 1995), and the open centre of the village as important features in the parish.

Donhead St Mary Parish Plan (2008) identified the former importance of patterns of land ownership to the character of the village, referencing Shaftesbury Abbey and the Arundells. This document describes the importance of the juxtaposition between small greensand cottages, interspersed with larger farmhouses and several larger houses such as Donhead Hall built by later gentry. (Donhead St Mary Parish Council 2008 *Donhead St Mary Parish Plan*).

East Knoyle Parish Plan (2009) identifies the importance of local building material (greensand and Chilmark stone) to the character of the parish and its position on the cross roads between ancient routeways. Other important features identified is the stone cross in St Marys churchyard and the surviving evidence for the Medieval manor house complex formed by the village hall and the adjacent stone thatched building. The community is very proud of its connection with Sir Christopher Wren which is marked by a striking mural in the village hall and the name of the village shop.

Key local features identified photographically by Tisbury Parish Plan (2007) include the square complete with its Victorian light, historic shop fronts on the High Street, and the old brewery.

Historically the area was associated with a history of religious non-conformity associated with both Catholicism and various Protestant groups (e.g. Baptists, and Quakers). This diversity is still present to day represented by the range of Christian denominations worshipping in the area.

## State of the Historic Environment

### Introduction

This landscape remains a distinctive and coherent area. However the historic landscape character of this area has declined over the last 100 years, despite this some of the individual components of this landscape are in good condition and active management.

### Current Knowledge

The best understood features in this landscape are the nationally designated designed landscapes which due to their importance have been subject to detailed analysis and enquiry. They are not in themselves representative of a broader engagement with this area in antiquity.

The other known important archaeological and historical sites and features in the areas have only been subject to limited study. However a systematic program of fieldwalking has enhanced understanding of Prehistoric activity in this area.

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

- The woodlands have not been subject to systematic study and it is possible that they cover unrecorded archaeological features.
- 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.
- There has not been a systematic assessment of aerial photographs of the area and it is therefore likely that many sites remain undiscovered.
- Building records for the area are sparse and attention has focused on the listed buildings associated with the designed landscape rather than on vernacular architecture.
- 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.
- There is a lack of information on the history and development of mills in the area and the remaining built heritage associated with this history.
- The extent of the surviving evidence for former orchards is unknown.

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 in the area and veteran woodland.

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

One SAM is at high risk and five at medium risk. The majority of SAMs in this area are under threat from tree and scrub growth (English Heritage at Risk Register 2009). This is indicative of the risk to the wider known archaeological record.

There is 1 building on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk register, a Grade II\* chapel immediately to the north of Pythouse.

Only one of the fifteen Conservation Areas in the AONB has an appraisal.

### **Loss and Condition**

Over the last 100 years there has been considerable change to the patterns of early enclosure in the vale and a resultant loss of coherence to the 1880s pattern of enclosure and the potential loss of earlier historic boundaries. Over 250 field boundaries have been removed, many of them in the distinctive pattern of small curving irregular fields interspersed with copses in the west of the area. In addition over 250 field boundaries have been added the majority on the northern side of the area.

Watermeadows created between 1700 and 1900 have also obscured traces of earlier land uses around the river channel 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.

Extensive areas of coniferous woodland have been added to the north of the area especially around Fonthill, and in other areas ancient woodland has been cleared, notably in the southwest of the area and in the east around Dinton.

Creeping change has had an impact on the historic pattern of settlement and has focused on the main settlements in the area, including Tisbury. 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 risk 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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, especially where parkland has reverted to farmland rather than being maintained as part of a wider landscape.

Archaeological earthworks in this area tend to have survived due to the high proportion of grassland in the river valleys, however many of them remain at risk from scrub encroachment.

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

### **Coherence**

This is a very coherent landscape with a distinctive cluster of pre 1800 fieldscapes, ancient woodland and remnants of historic land use, such as common land and historic settlements. The designed landscapes in this area are in some respects the most coherent, accessible and easily appreciated features in the area, partly due to the fact that several are easily accessible to the general public. The historic features of the built environment associated with historic settlements and designed landscapes are very visible. Archaeological monuments in this landscape are much less coherent partly because they are not presented as sites and partly because they are obscured by scrub and woodland.

## Forces for Change

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

The character of the rolling clay valley is distinctively different to the chalk landscapes which are so prevalent in the AONB. The sensitivity of this landscape lies in its enclosing elements. The overall sensitivity of this area to change is judged to be moderate-high. Past development or land use change in the greensand hills on the edges of the Vale of Wardour has not always been sensitive to inherent qualities of this landscape. For example, conifer plantings within the ancient deciduous woodland are visually intrusive, especially on skylines, as they express a different set of attributes in the landscape. To some degree, this has distorted the former sense of intimacy and compositional balance on the hills. This area is considered to be 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: Agriculture and Farming

- 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.
- 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

- More frequent and severe flooding, which may damage some historic buildings
- Increased ground subsidence could pose a threat
- Fewer frosts and drier summers, and the northward migration of pests and diseases, which may make it difficult to maintain traditional planting schemes in some historic gardens.
- Some historically authentic tree plantings may not be viable by the time they reach maturity.
- A possible increase in the frequency of extreme weather, or a change in its geographical distribution, which could pose an increased risk of damage to some historic landscapes and buildings as well as trees.
- Small scale hydro-electric projects may provide opportunities for the careful reuse of mills, water wheels, and mill races.
- 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.

- Some micro-renewable might be suitable to fit on historic buildings.
- Energy saving measures could detract from the historic character and fabric of buildings.

#### Theme 3: Industry

- Stone quarries represent a crucial local resource for the maintenance of existing historic buildings, and the creation of new buildings that are in keeping with wider settlements. If existing levels of extraction are maintained this will have a positive contribution to the historic character of settlement.

#### Theme 4: Land Holdings in the AONB

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

#### Theme 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 6: Recreation and Tourism

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

#### Theme 7: Settlement and Infrastructure Development

- Reuse of historic farmsteads provides increased opportunities for maintaining these structures that contribute much to the historic landscape character of the AONB as long as care is taken on the design of any conversions to retain original materials, openings and character. The creation of new farmyards with standardised farm buildings adjacent to the historic farmstead may lead to neglect of these historic assets or conversely to opportunities to ensure their future through well considered conversion.
- 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.

- 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.
- New settlement on the edge of this area may place Increased strain on the historic road network, impact on view from key historic landscapes within the AONB. Increased threat to buried archaeological remains, archaeological earthworks and historic field patterns on the edge of the AONB from development. Increased light pollution may blur the distinction between urban and rural areas and affect people's perception of a sense of long-established cultural heritage.

*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

- Archaeological monuments are at risk from scrub encroachment.
- Potential loss of historic farm buildings and other historic built features not in active management.
- Erosion of historic landscape character in key historic settlements lacking Conservation Area Appraisals.
- Survival of Fovant Cap Badges reliant on the ongoing work of the Fovant Badge Society.

### 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** - 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 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 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.

#### **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](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.

