

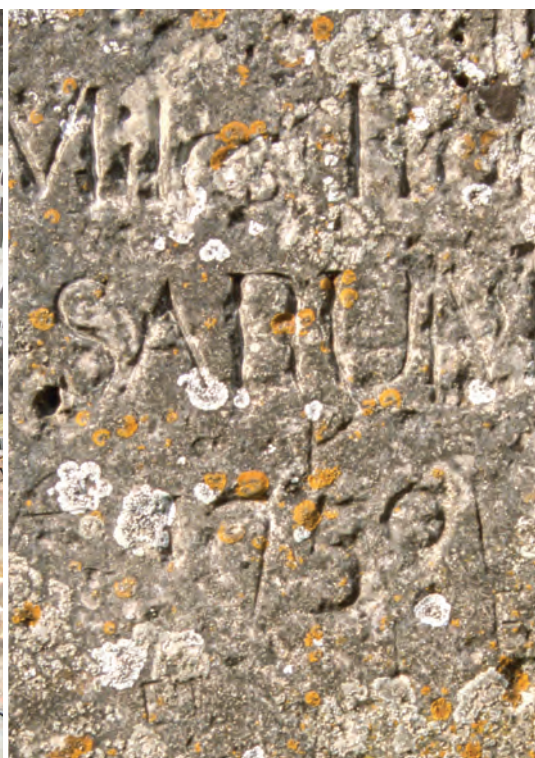


Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



# Historic Environment Action Plans

Theme 2: Farms and Farming










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 Theme Statements

Fourteen distinct Historic Landscape Themes have been identified in the AONB. These were chosen by the HEAP Steering group as representing the topics which best encapsulate the historic character of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.

The theme descriptions aim to provide an overview of each theme 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 themes 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 Themes'.

## Introduction to Theme 2: Farms and Farming

*“where the plow goes within three or four inches of the solid rock of chalk, are made fruitful, and bear very good wheat, as well as rye and barley .”*

Daniel Defoe 1725

The aim of this document is to provide an overview of the impact of farms and farming on the AONB landscape and the evidence of past farming surviving in today's landscape.

The AONB is an extremely rural area. Over 80% of the land is farmland and, historically, agriculture and forestry were the major employers in the AONB. Past changes in farming practice have fundamentally changed the structure and appearance of the AONB landscape.



*Bokerley Dyke*

## Summary of Key Characteristics

- First large scale cultivation of the AONB occurred in the Early Bronze Age around 2000 BC with the creation of a domesticated landscape by 1500 BC.

The evidence for this, later prehistoric and Roman farming consists of extensive tracts of ancient field boundaries bounding nucleated farms and small settlements.

- Remnants of Medieval farming preserved as fossilised strip fields provide evidence of the feudal system of open farming. Surviving common land and place name evidence marks the Medieval system of ancient common rights such as grazing, pannage and 'estover'. There is a medium survival of pre 1750 farmstead buildings, including the great monastic Medieval tithe barn at Tisbury.
- Large historic farm complexes on the edge of settlements including historic barns, grain stores and outbuildings. Loose courtyard plans predominate, with regular courtyard plans dating from the 19th century being dominant on the higher downs.
- Survival of historic patterns of farm holdings including valley farms which take a slice of river valley, valley slope and downland, and rounded farm holdings on the Chase plateau.
- 19<sup>th</sup> century model farms associated with great estates, including single large examples as at Longleat, and multiple model groups of farm buildings as on the Cranborne Chase. Expansion of barns and farms from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards into downland areas.
- Surviving evidence of the 'sheep corn' system of agriculture in the form of relic water meadows and a small number of late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century outfarms surviving on the downs
- A major switch from livestock to arable farming in the last 150 years associated with massive and sweeping changes in land use in downland areas.
- Modern picture of extensive arable holdings on former downland areas interspersed with remnant grasslands still used as grazing. This contrasts markedly with the pastoral landscapes of the chalk valley systems and the clay vale.



*Medieval Tithe Barn at Tisbury*

## Linkages to other Historic Landscape Character Statements

This statement forms one of 14 AONB wide Historic Landscape Character Theme descriptions. These are accompanied by a series of 12 Historic Landscape Character Area descriptions which cover the whole of the AONB. These documents together build up a picture of the key characteristics of the Historic Environment of the AONB at a landscape scale. These statements combined inform the Historic Environment Action Plans created for the AONB landscape.

Other Themes of particular relevance to this theme are:

**T3** Theme 3: Fields in the Landscape

**T9** Theme 9: Open Land

All the Historic Landscape Character Areas are of relevance to this theme.

**A1** to **A12**

## History and Context

The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a deeply rural area. 82% of the area is farmland comprising two large belts of arable land in the chalkland belts in the north and south of the AONB, sandwiching an area of clay pasture running as an east west wedge through the centre of the AONB.

### *Origins and Development of Farming in the AONB*

The origins of farming and the introduction of domesticated animals and plants can be traced back to the Neolithic period in the AONB (4000 – 2500 BC). For much of the Neolithic, and indeed the Early Bronze Age, evidence for settlement and sedentism (living permanently in one place) is lacking. Evidence for settlement on the chalk lands of Wessex is insubstantial, consisting of flint scatters, pits, hearths and stake holes suggesting varying degrees of mobility and longevity. The Bronze Age (2500-700 BC) in the AONB is characterised by a shift to sedentism (permanent living in one location) marked by large scale cultivation and clearly defined settlements. By the Middle Bronze Age the landscape of the AONB was defined and bounded by extensive field systems. This general pattern continues into the Iron Age (400 BC to AD 53) where archaeological evidence has revealed a pattern of different settlement types (enclosed, unenclosed), and sizes (single and multiple dwelling), with the classic pattern of round houses associated with ancillary dwellings. These farming settlements are set within large scale field systems. These field systems continued in use in the Roman period. Farming patterns in the Early Medieval period are less well understood.

The process of the creation of the modern agricultural land in the AONB has its origins with Late Medieval open strip fields, and through the creation of enclosed piecemeal

irregular fields. At the same time new irregular piecemeal fields were created from open land and the assarting of ancient forest became increasingly common. The first formally arranged and larger scale attempts at enclosure occurred from the 16th century onwards and became politically formalised with the Parliamentary Enclosure Acts of the 18th and 19th centuries. In the 20th century the enclosure process accelerated with the creation of large prairie fields and the reorganisation of existing field systems.

Another trend was the reversion of chalk downland back to open chalk grassland probably from the early Medieval period onwards. Only 150 years ago sheep farming was a crucial part of the local economy linked to the sheep-corn system of agriculture which was a dominant part of the rural economy in this area between AD 1600 and AD 1900. This meant that there were very large flocks of sheep moving between downland and valley locations. This system broke down in the 10th century with the development of artificial fertilisers and more intensive methods of agriculture resulting in the conversion of arable of large swathes of chalk grassland.

Dairy farming was once much more common in the clay vale – leading to the common distinction between chalk and cheese. Over the last 10 years there has been a significant decline in numbers of all types of livestock (29%) and the conversion of existing dairy farms to beef cattle.

#### *Origins and Development of Historic Farmsteads in the AONB*

Economic boom in the 12th and 13th centuries included the building of large farms on monastic and large estates. This was followed by contraction of settlement and the leasing out of estates after the famines and plagues of the 14th century. The period from the 15th century was characterised by a general increase in agricultural incomes and productivity. Farm sizes tend to increase.

From 1750 to 1880 the increased output of this period was encouraged by rising grain prices, and enabled by the expansion of the cultivated area. This meant that there was a continued reorganisation and enlargement of holdings.

From the late 1870s, prices fell and farming entered a depression from which it did not recover until the Second World War. Grain production became concentrated on the drier soils of the eastern and southern counties and increased demand for meat and dairy produce stimulated interest in grassland management.

From 1940 to the present the intensification and increased specialisation of farming in the post war period has been accompanied by the introduction of wide-span multi-purpose sheds in concrete, steel and asbestos which meet increasing requirements for machinery and the environmental control of livestock and on-farm production, particularly of milk.

B2

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

B4

See Background Paper 4 for an overview of historic land use in the AONB

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 pattern and history of historic land use in the present day landscape of the AONB is recorded and analysed in the *AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation*, as well as the distribution of historic farms (Rouse 2008).

An overview of the archaeology of the Cranborne Chase is available from Martin Green's description of the Down Farm landscape in *A Landscape Revealed 10'000 years on a Chalkland Farm* (2000) published by Tempus. Later prehistoric land use is discussed in *Roman Wiltshire and After* (2001) published by the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Museum.

An accessible introduction to changes to the agricultural landscape in the Post Medieval period is 'Farmer, Landlords and Landscapes. Rural Britain, 1720 to 1870' by Susanna Wade Martins (2004) published by Windgather Press. The origins of the Enclosure movement are discussed in *Abstracts of Wiltshire Inclosure Awards* published by the Wiltshire Record Society in 1971. 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.

Descriptions of the character of historic farm buildings by National Character Area are available from the English Heritage pilot website [www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk](http://www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk). Details on English Heritages work to characterise Historic Farmsteads are available from the English Heritage website [www.english-heritage.org.uk/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/)

B10

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

## Landscape Scale Characteristics and Components

### 1. Prehistoric and Roman Farming

#### *Background*

The impact of prehistoric and Roman farming on the landscape of the AONB was twofold. Firstly the impact of changes in human land use radically altered the environment of the AONB and secondly from the Bronze Age onwards intensive farming practice created the pattern of field systems and enclosures which can still be read in the landscape today.

#### *Landscape scale impact*

##### *1. Environmental*

Direct evidence for farming in the AONB in the Neolithic period is limited to isolated finds such as the domesticated cattle bone uncovered from the fir tree shaft dating to the early Neolithic period. The greatest impact of Neolithic farming and land use practices was on the environment of the AONB. The general pattern seems to be that clearance of the woodland of the Wessex Chalkland occurred earlier in lowland locations than on the tops of the downs. There is some suggestion that lower areas were partially cleared in the Mesolithic period or did not support mixed deciduous woodland at this point. Early Neolithic clearance seems to have been primarily for pasture although pollen evidence suggests cereal cultivation was carried out, though on a small scale. By the Late Neolithic, the area of pasture had been expanded and there is limited evidence for corresponding expansion of arable agriculture.

By 3000BC the Wessex chalklands were intensively exploited and Late Neolithic monuments were associated with grassland. In addition soil resulting from cultivation begins to accumulate in dry valleys. The chalk downland was cleared of secondary woodland by the Middle Bronze Age and large scale mixed farmland established on the downland. There seems to be an increase in arable crops through until the Middle Iron Age. There are no studies of environmental sequences within the AONB that cover the Roman period. Studies of deposits from the Kennet Valley in northern Wiltshire were indicative of mixed farming, the arable principally being cultivation of spelt wheat.

## *2. The direct impact of Prehistoric and Roman Farming*



*Reconstruction of an Iron Age round house at the Ancient Technology Centre, Cranborne*

The direct impact of prehistoric farming on the landscapes seen today in the AONB did not begin until the Bronze Age. Cultivation appears to be carried out on a large scale in



the Early Bronze Age 2500 BC – 1500 BC after which notable volumes of colluvium began to accumulate in dry valleys. This becomes a more widespread change around 2000 BC with subsistence becoming increasingly based on cereal cultivation. Open country species come to dominate the environmental evidence. Ploughing appears for the first time as an agent of landscape change and often precedes the establishment of settlement and field boundaries. The Middle Bronze Age 1500-1000 BC sees the creation of a domesticated landscape. Substantial round houses appear and the wider landscape was defined and bounded by field systems. In the Late Bronze Age there is some evidence for the reorganisation of the landscape with “Wessex linear ditches” cutting across Middle Bronze Age fields.

In the Iron Age the pattern of agrarian settlement set within large scale field systems continues within which are set the classic Iron Age settlements of round houses associated with ancillary dwelling. However, although many of the well preserved field systems on the Chalkland are Iron Age in date it cannot be assumed all are. The Iron Age field systems and settlement patterns on the West Wiltshire Downs continue in use into the Roman period.

Evidence for Roman settlement in the AONB is extremely rural in character with no Roman urban centres being present. The importance of this rural area increased in the later Roman period as the southwest region as a whole prospered. There are several Roman villas within the AONB which would have formed the centre of farming ‘estates’. There have also been a number of significant investigations of non-villa rural sites notably in the heartland of Cranborne Chase set, within large scale field systems. However the chronologies, transition and context of non-villa settlement are still problematic, as the majority of sites are only known through field survey.

These field systems and enclosure exist in the landscape today as earthworks in areas of grassland, slight earthworks in fields which have undergone less intensive ploughing, and as cropmarks in many areas of the chalk downlands which are under plough. In some places these field systems appear to align with modern field patterns while in others there is no alignment apparent. Many of these field systems have not been firmly dated to any particular time period.

## 2. Medieval Farming

### *Background*

Evidence for the impact of Early Medieval farming practices on the landscape of the AONB is limited but by the Late Medieval period a system of manors each with their own land holdings had been established.

### *Landscape scale impact*

In the early Medieval period there is evidence for the creation of estates which formed the core of agrarian production in the Medieval period of the AONB. The division of the landscape into estates is represented in surviving boundaries, for example Heytesbury and Donhead St Mary were possible Saxon mother churches sited at the centre of large estates. These Church estates were transforming into the more familiar parish system by the late 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Evidence for Medieval farming in the AONB is represented by limited ridge and furrow, strip lynchets on the chalk escarpments and the fossilisation of strips in modern fields, for example around Martin, in the Gussage's and around Ashmore. These fields existed within a mixed pattern of rough grazing, open downland, common land and woodland.

The expansion of agriculture is represented by the creation of these strip lynchets and the establishment of new market places, such as in the planned town of Hindon. The importance of livestock in this period is hinted at by the great drove roads which are located along the tops of the chalk escarpment and downland, and allowed access to important markets such as Salisbury.

Another expression of the impact of Medieval system of farming is to be found in the manorial system. Manorialism was characterised by the vesting of legal and economic power in a lord, supported economically from his own direct landholding often based on a manor bounded within a particular parish. The survival of the fabric of manor houses and Medieval halls in many of the villages of the AONB represents the original 'Demense' often at the core of historic villages.



*Haymaking from a Medieval Book of Hours*

### 3. Post Medieval Farming

#### *Background*

The dissolution of the monasteries, agrarian revolution and later the industrial revolution led to the establishment of new middle class members of the agrarian sector. This included larger tenant farmers who rented land from the landowners and employed agricultural labourers to do the manual work, and yeoman farmers who owned enough land to support a comfortable lifestyle but nevertheless farmed it themselves.

The agricultural productivity of the AONB grew significantly in the period of the agricultural revolution AD 1700-1870. This period saw increased mechanization and the increased influence on the selective breeding of animals. Following the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, and improvements in transport this opened up a greater market and led to what has been called the 'golden age' in British farming in the AONB (1850–70).

#### *Landscape scale impact*

Notable development in the AONB includes the development of the sheep-corn system of agriculture AD 1700-1900. From the 1600, systems of managed water meadows developed in many valley bottoms. The early grass that could be produced by water meadows was a crucial element to the farming regimes of the chalklands of Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire. The meadows formed a central feature of the local sheep-corn system of agriculture. This is represented in today's landscape by relic water meadows and a small number of late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century out farms surviving on the downs.



Relic watermeadows in the AONB

In addition during the 18th and 19th centuries, the enclosure of the landscape escalated through local acts of Parliament, called the Inclosure Acts. These Parliamentary enclosures consolidated strips in the open fields into more compact units, and enclosed much of the remaining pasture commons or wastes. This resulted in the pattern of the regular grid like fields most notable on the Fovant terrace and in the area between Chalbury and Woodlands.

The golden age of agriculture led to the establishment of model farms in the AONB, including those at Longleat and the further expansion of arable land across downland areas.

#### **4. Modern Farming**

##### *Background*

A great depression occurred in agriculture between AD 1870-1914. The agricultural depression and introduction in the early 20th century of increasingly heavy levels of taxation on inherited wealth put an end to agricultural land as the primary source of wealth for the English upper classes. In the 1920s however prices for wheat, cattle and milk fell, and there was further economic and social hardship as part of the Great Depression. During the Second World War many areas of downland that had been under pasture for centuries were ploughed up again to maximise arable production. Post-war intensification of agriculture continued.

#### *Landscape scale impact*



Farm machinery in action c1926-1939

(reproduced with the permission of  
Tisbury Local history Society)

The landscape scale impact of the agricultural depression was felt in the form of major land sales and the post 1918 break up pattern of land holdings in some areas of the AONB.

Intensification of agriculture led to the ploughing of slopes and elevated downland, and the removal of hedgerows and field boundaries to create large scale fields. This has resulted in loss of archaeological features and, in some instances, loss of topsoil, a decline in chalk grasslands and hedgerows, with an associated decline in wild plant, bird and insect species. Some areas are now being enhanced through agri-environment schemes to maximise the environmental and cultural assets on a land holding.

### **5. Historic Farmsteads**

Historic farmsteads and their buildings make a fundamental contribution to landscape character and local distinctiveness. This is because their varied character, like the

patterns of settlement and landscapes around them, has been shaped by centuries of change and cultural traditions. However, there has been no systematic survey of historic farmsteads within the AONB so the following descriptions below have been created using English Heritage's national work on Historic Farmstead Characterisation <http://www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk>. This needs to be verified and enhanced using local data.



*Historic Farm Buildings at Launceston Farm*

## 5.1 Morphology and Built Character of Historic Farmsteads

### *Background*

The earliest surviving barns in the AONB relate to the great barns of the great Medieval (pre-1550 period) estates. Farmhouses and other buildings (especially barns) which survive from below this high-status level provide the first evidence for wealth generated solely from local agriculture and of a class of farmers counted as among the wealthiest in Europe.

Substantially complete farm buildings of the 1550-1750 period are rare: typically only the farmhouse and barn survive. They often provide the first surviving evidence for the development and strengthening of regional traditions and building types.

Substantially complete examples of farm buildings of the 1750–1840 period are far less common than those of the post-1840 period, when many farmsteads matured into their present form and huge numbers of buildings were erected.

Some, particularly the planned courtyard farmsteads of the period, represent new developments in farmstead planning or the architectural aspirations of landowners. Others continue to be strongly representative of both the variety and development of local and regional agricultural systems and local vernacular traditions.

The inter-war period witnessed the development of more intense forms of housing for pigs and poultry, and the replacement, as a result of hygiene regulations, of earlier

forms of housing for dairy cattle with concrete floors and stalls, and metal roofs and fittings. County Councils entered the scene as a builder of new farmsteads. Alongside the construction of new farm buildings, traditional farm buildings were adapted to new needs, and the use of corrugated iron (mostly for repair) has guaranteed the survival and reuse of earlier buildings, particularly the increasingly redundant threshing barn.

The national stock of farm buildings grew by a quarter between 1945 and 1960 alone. Modern farmstead buildings either replaced earlier structures or were built on the edge of older steadings close to access points.

See [http://www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk/farmstead\\_guidance.html](http://www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk/farmstead_guidance.html) for more information.

#### *Landscape scale impact*

Information regarding the landscape scale impact of farmsteads on the AONB is only available from the descriptions of historic farmstead character by National Character Area. The information captured for the national character areas within the AONB is included below:

#### NCA 132 Salisbury Plan and West Wiltshire Downs

- Medium survival of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. Farmsteads are typically large and often arranged in a loose courtyard plan with detached buildings set around a yard. The farmstead could have two or more large aisled threshing barns. This area has one of the main concentrations of timber-framed aisled barns in the country that stretches to the east and south-east into Hampshire and south Berkshire. Free-standing staddle granaries are also characteristic. Staddle barns, a late 18<sup>th</sup> century variation on the threshing barn are found in south east Wiltshire, west Berkshire and west Hampshire. There are some early and very rare examples of low pre-18<sup>th</sup> century cattle sheds.
- A particular characteristic is the use of Chilmark Stone in the south of the area which was often used in a chequered pattern with knapped flint. The Wylye Valley has distinctive buildings in this pattern.
- Cob and thatch was typically used for smaller houses, some farm buildings and boundary walls. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries brick and flint was often used. Brick was used from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on larger farmhouses and by the 18<sup>th</sup> century was often used to re-front older timber-framed houses or for new buildings.

Source: [www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk/countryside\\_character\\_area.html](http://www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk/countryside_character_area.html)



*Threshing Barn with Staddle Stones*

#### NCA 133 Blackmore Vale and Vale of Wardour

- Loose courtyard and regular L-shaped plans predominant, with some dispersed and linear plans.
- Farmsteads reflect the mixed farming of the area with threshing and combination barns, cattle housing, cartsheds and stables seen on most farms. A number of farmsteads include relatively large mills for grinding corn. On areas of heavier clay soils dairying was predominant and small farms with no recognisable barn are typical.
- Timber-framing is seen in a few buildings but stone was most widely used, especially the local greensand and limestones, and sandstones from Chicksgrove and Chilmark. The availability of stone meant that brick was not widely used until the later 19th century. For many farm buildings of the 19th century brick was used for window and door surrounds. Plain clay tiles and pantiles are widely used. There is some straw thatch.

Source: [www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk/countryside\\_character\\_area.html](http://www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk/countryside_character_area.html)

#### NCA 134 Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase

- There is a medium survival of pre-1750 farmstead buildings.
- Loose courtyard plans predominate, with regular courtyard plans dating from the 19th century being dominant on the higher downs. However, few farmsteads had buildings that fully enclosed the yard and some of the smaller farms would have had L-shaped plans consisting of a barn, stables, cartshed

and granary. The house is often set at right angles to the yard, presenting only the gable end to the farmyard.

- Sheep and corn farming was the dominant agricultural system from the Medieval period and the principal manor farms were provided with two or three barns. The importance of arable is reflected in the surviving barns of up to nine bays in length, although five bay barns are most common. Increases in grain production and yields in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries often led to the construction of an additional barn and, in many cases, the enlargement of earlier barns.
- A small number of late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century outfarms survive on the downs, typically with barn and flanking shelter sheds facing into yards. Some retain rare surviving evidence of sheds for sheep.
- The oldest barns are stone built, whilst there are few fully aisled barns with their enormous expanses of roof in proportion to walling. Some timber frame but brick farm buildings dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> /19<sup>th</sup> centuries predominate. By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century timber-framing had been totally replaced by brick, brick and flint, or chalk cob for nearly all farm buildings. With a significant arable production straw thatch has been the traditional material for roofing the farm buildings of the area for centuries. Tile and, more recently, corrugated steel has replaced thatch on many farm buildings. From the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century slate became more common although tile continued to be used on new buildings. The roofs of many farm buildings of all periods are half-hipped whilst later brick buildings often have gabled roofs.

Within and around the farmsteads boundary walls are commonly built of flint and brick or chalk cob with thatched or tile cappings. Where cob is used the walls tend to be higher and, with the distinctive thatch capping, are characteristic features within the chalk landscape.

Source: [www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk/countryside\\_character\\_area.html](http://www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk/countryside_character_area.html)

- Example of individual farm buildings in the AONB.

Pre 1750 – The Tithe Barn at Tisbury forming part of a 15<sup>th</sup> century monastic grange. The barn is constructed of rubble stone and dressed limestone. It is comprised of thirteen interior bays with central opposing gabled porches and planked doors. This is reputedly the largest tithe barn in England, though not the longest. This barn together with the farmhouse and gatehouses is part of one of the finest surviving groups of monastic grange buildings in England.

18<sup>th</sup> century – Stop Farm, Fonthill Gifford. 18<sup>th</sup> century farmstead complex of thatched barn and staddle stone granary next to a 17<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse with 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations

19<sup>th</sup> century – model farm buildings at Stalls Farm, Corsley. These were built in 1859 by W.Wilkinson for the 4th Marquess of Bath. The plan consists of five parallel ranges of covered yards and stock sheds, attached by covered way to barns, offices and sawing sheds to the north. Two pairs of flanking ranges, formerly stables, piggeries,



cartsheds and cowsheds, now entirely for cows, have hipped roofs,

Source: The Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest Online

## 5.2 Distributions of Historic Farmsteads

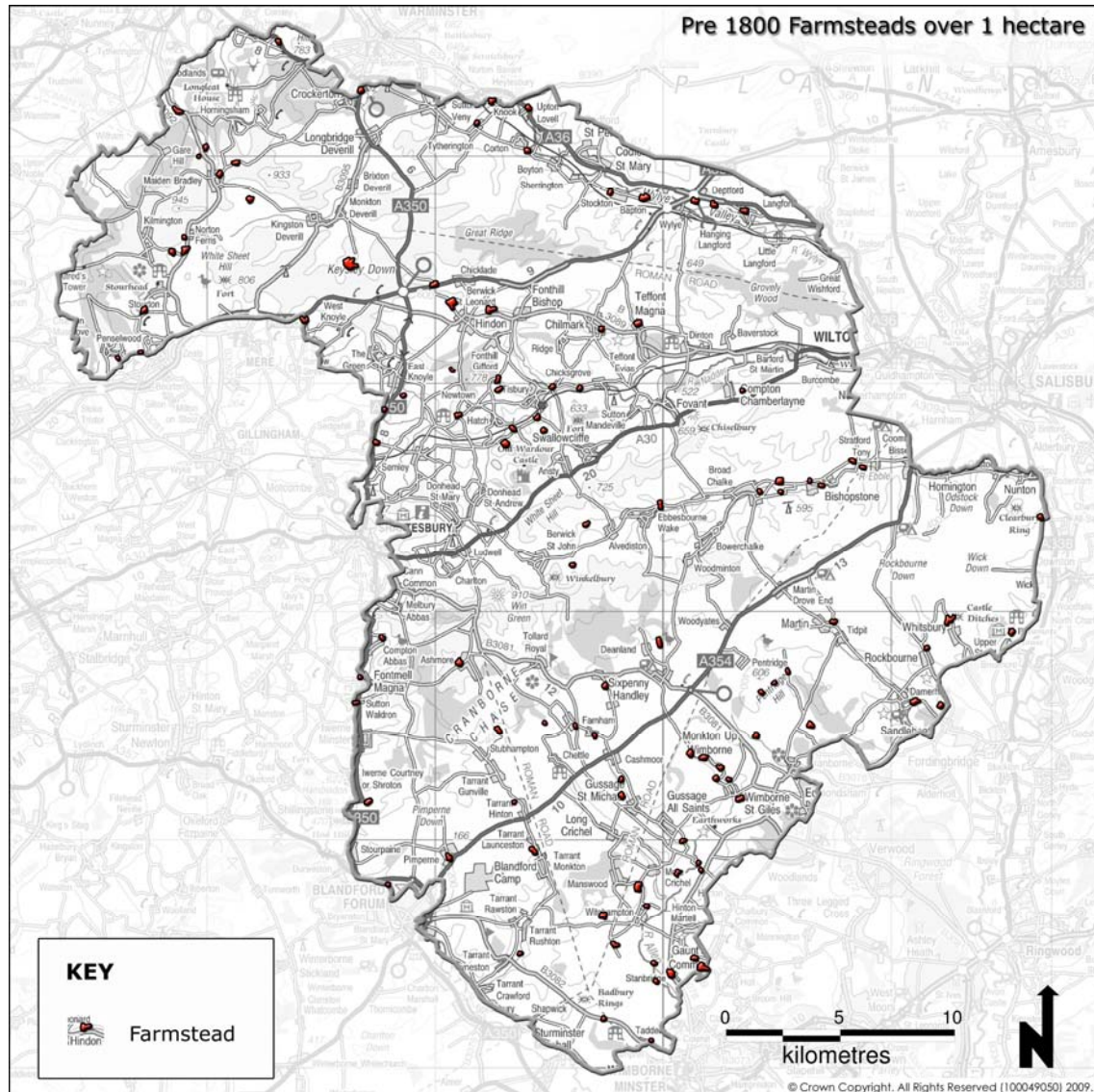


Figure One: Pre 1800 Farmstead over 1 hectare

### Background

The AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation undertook an initial survey of the location of farm buildings over 1 hectare.

### Landscape scale impact

Pre 1800 farm complexes are found across the AONB with notable concentrations along the Tarrant Valley, on the greensand terrace between Horningsham and

Penselwood, and in the Vale of Wardour. In the river valleys of the Ebbel and Wylle they tend to be evenly distributed between the main areas of settlement, while in the Vale of Wardour and Allen Valley they are more isolated. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century new farmsteads tended to be isolated, often located away from existing villages. In some instances the lines of these new farmsteads mirror the locations of existing settlement. A good example of this process is on the Melbury to Blandford escarpment where new farms created in the 19th century are evenly spaced on the escarpment above the existing pre 1800 settlement in the valley below. This expansion of farms into downland areas continued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast in the river valleys and clay vale the farmsteads tend to retain their historic distribution.



## Historic Environment Actions



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

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

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

**The Potential Mechanism** - A mapping project for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB could fill gaps in knowledge of plough damage sites, uncover new sites (through crop marks, earthwork patterns etc.), and spatially link known buried archaeology. The aim of English Heritage's National Mapping Programme (NMP) is to enhance the understanding of past human settlement, by providing primary information and synthesis for all archaeological sites and landscapes visible on aerial photographs, or other airborne remote sensed data.

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

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

**The Potential Mechanism** - The national farmstead characterisation work championed by English Heritage could be built on to fill gaps in our knowledge of historic farm buildings and thereby help to ensure that they are properly conserved and enhanced in the future, or to ensure that any reuse is undertaken sensitively and on the basis of full understanding of the original form and function of the structures and spaces. One approach would be to:

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

### **ACTION 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.

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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	Great Ridge and Grovelly Woods
	A7	Fovant Terrace and the Area Between Chalbury and Woodlands
	A8	Chalk Escarpments
	A9	Vale of Wardour
	A10	Wooded Chalk Downland of the Cranborne Chase and Chetterwood
	A11	Downland Hills
	A12	Southern Downland Belt
Theme	T1	Ancient Boundaries and Land Ownership
	T2	<b>Farms and Farming</b>
	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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