



Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

B7



Area



Theme



Supplementary



Method

Background

Historic Environment Action Plans

Background 7: Major Historical
Events, Trends and Fashions





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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Introduction: Major Historical Events, Trends and Fashions

A selection of key historical events and fashions which have had landscape scale impact on the present day landscape of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.

This does not include developments in the landscape of the AONB in prehistory which are described in Document 2 “Description of the Archaeology of the AONB by time period”.

Roman Invasion

That start of Roman Britain in the South West region is traditionally dated to AD 43. The archaeology of the next 300 years is associated with the imposition of Roman culture into Britain, ultimately deriving from the expansion of the Roman Empire out of Rome.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Network of Roman roads established across the AONB

- Roman villa sites, including an excavated example open to the public
- Roman settlement and field systems existing as extensive earthworks

Saxon Invasion AD 500-700

The area became increasingly under the influence of Anglo-Saxon presence and culture and by the 7th century AD the Saxon conquest of the area was complete. During this time the influence of Christianity also increased with the foundation of bishoprics and mother churches.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Linear earthen banks and ditches called 'dykes' established across the AONB
- Saxon origins to several churches in the AONB
- Place names are testimony to the spread of Saxon influence across the AONB

The Norman Conquest AD 1066

The Norman Conquest largely removed the native ruling class, replacing it with a foreign, French-speaking monarchy, aristocracy, and clerical hierarchy.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Establishment of royal hunting areas of Selwood, Grovely and Cranborne Chase which have a lasting legacy over land use in the landscape.
- System of motte and bailey castles established.
- Establishment of parish system of churches in the 10th and 11th century
- Establishment of the Medieval systems of land division, the systems of Hundreds, has a profound impact on the character of the landscape.

Royal Estates and Great Monastic Houses AD 1066-1536

Wealth and power in the Medieval ages rested primarily with the Crown and the powerful lay magnates surrounding the crown and the ecclesiastical magnates centred on the great religious houses

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Great tithe barn and abbey remains at Tisbury
- Impact of direct ownership of religious houses

Feudal Society AD 1000-1500

Manorialism is an essential ingredient of feudal society and was widely practiced in medieval western Europe. Manorialism was characterised by the vesting of legal and economic power in a lord, supported economically from his own direct landholding, and from the obligatory contributions of a legally subject part of the peasant population under his jurisdiction. These obligations could be payable in several ways, in labour, in kind, or, on rare occasions, in coin.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Remnants of Medieval farming preserved as fossilised strip fields provide evidence of feudal system of open farming. Surviving common land and place name evidence marks Medieval system of ancient common rights.
- Survival of the fabric of Manor houses and Medieval halls representing the original 'Demense' often at the core of historic villages.

Medieval Population Expansion and Retraction, the Black Death and the Desertion of Villages, and the Rise of the Wool Trade AD 1400 - 1600

The population of Medieval England reached a peak in the early 1300s. Population decline had already set in by the early 14th century in England partly because of soil exhaustion and disease. The pandemic known to history as the Black Death, entered England in 1348; exacerbating this decline, and causing the death of between a third and more than half of the nation's inhabitants. Among the most immediate consequences of the Black Death in England was a shortage of farm labour, and a corresponding rise in wages. During this period many settlements were abandoned but while the plague must have greatly hastened the population decline, most deserted Medieval settlements actually seem to date from the 15th century, when fields cultivated for cereals and vegetables by villagers were transformed into sheep pastures, often with ridge and furrow surviving under grass, even until today. This change of land use was brought about by landowners to take advantage of the increasingly profitable wool trade.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Planned Medieval villages established with thriving sheep markets
- Large number of shrunken and deserted Medieval villages in the river valleys

The English Reformation AD 1500 -1600

The Church of England breaks away from the authority of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Transformation of the interior of many of the churches in the AONB. Centre of Catholic dissent focused on the Arundells of Wardour.

The Dissolution of the Monasteries AD 1536-1541

The administrative and legal processes by which Henry VIII disbanded monasteries, priories, convents and friaries in England, Wales and Ireland; appropriated their income, disposed of their assets and provided for their former members. This process created a new class of lay landowners.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Monastic lands across the AONB are sold

- Religious houses, refectory's and hospitals close

Increased Religious Freedom and the Rise of Religious Dissent AD 1600-1900

With the Act of Toleration enacted on 24 May 1689, Nonconformists had freedom of worship. This included Protestants who dissented from the Church of England such as Baptists, Congregationalists and Quakers. Growth of Methodism in the late 18th century, and the gradual emancipation of Catholics in the late 18th and early 19th century. The growth of the twin "revivals" in nineteenth century Anglicanism — Evangelical and Catholic — were hugely influential.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Dissenting churches and chapels, and burial grounds, established across the AONB

Rise of the New Peers, Landed Gentry and Yeoman Classes AD 1600-1800

The dissolution of the monasteries, agrarian revolution and later the industrial revolution led to the establishment of new members of the upper classes of English society. This included in the AONB newly created Earls who were granted large areas of lands, new members of the landed gentry not members of the peerage who nevertheless owned a large country house and estate and whose main wealth was in land. The new agricultural sector's middle class, on the other hand, comprised the 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.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Highly legible post dissolution pattern of landownership including the establishment of new peerages including those centred on Wilton, Wimborne St Giles, and Cranborne.

Rise of the great house AD 1600-1900

Between 1600 and 1900 landowners expressed their status and wealth through the construction of great houses, often associated with formally designed gardens and landscapes. They were constructed and rebuilt in the latest architectural styles including baroque, palladianism, and neo-classicism.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Great houses established in the centre of parkland, many in the palladian and the neo-classical style.

English Civil War AD 1641-1651

A series of armed conflicts between Parliamentarians and Royalists followed by a period of government by Commonwealth until the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II in 1660.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Ruins of the Medieval Castle of Wardour which was mined and destroyed under Parliamentary siege in 1644

The British Agricultural Revolution AD 1700-1870

The agricultural productivity of Britain grew significantly in the period of the agricultural revolution. This in turn supported unprecedented population growth, freeing up a significant percentage of the workforce, and thereby helping to drive the Industrial Revolution. This period saw increased mechanization, and the increased influence on the selective breeding of animals.

Notable developments in the AONB included:

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. These played a crucial role in Britain's farming economy between 1600 and 1900. 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.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- relic water meadows and a small number of late 18th or early 19th century out farms surviving on the downs

The enclosure of land through parliamentary act AD 1750-1850

During the 18th and 19th centuries, enclosures were by means of 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. Parliamentary enclosures usually provided commoners with some other land in compensation for the loss of common rights, although often of poor quality and limited extent.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Modern picture of extensive arable holdings on former downland areas interspersed with remnant grasslands still used as grazing.

The Rise of the Designed Georgian Landscape AD 1720-1820

During the 18th century a new style of garden and park was invented in England, its form involved a naturalistic layout of curvaceous asymmetry, favouring green material and including formal water features.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Landscaped parks and gardens established across the AONB including those of national importance associated with named designers such as Capability Brown and Humphrey Repton

Industrial Revolution AD 1750 - 1880

During the 18th and 19th century there were major changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and transport. Trade and production expanded and previously manual labour and draft-animal-based economy was replaced by machine based manufacturing. There was an increased utilisation of water wheels. In the 1850s the process gained momentum with the development of steam powered ships and late in the 19th century with the internal combustion engine.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Former mills and water wheels along all of the chalk river valley systems.
- New railway lines introduced into the AONB in the 19th century.
- Steam powered tractors accelerate ploughing-up of downland.
- New markets becoming available for local industry's, such as quarrying of Chilmark stone leads to expansion in extraction and the number of quarries.
- Shift in settlement focus from carriage roads to railway lines leads to the decline of Hindon and the rise of Tisbury as the major settlement in the AONB.

Napoleonic Wars, Agricultural Depression, and Corn Laws AD 1800-1850

After a period of depression following the Napoleonic Wars, agriculture developed rapidly during the 19th century. The landed interests countered the post-war slump in agriculture with protective legislation, although the implementation of the Corn Laws led to rural poverty and discontent in the first half of the 19th century including the Swing Riots in 1830.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Chalk was often extracted and burnt leading to an increase in lime kilns to produce lime fertiliser.
- The demands of the navy and industry for timber and fuel meant that many surviving woods and copses were clear felled, or substantially reduced.

The Golden Age of English Agriculture AD 1850-70

Following the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, the expanding urban population and improvements in transport opened up a greater market and led to what has been called the 'golden age' in British farming (1850–70).

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Model farms, established including those at Longleat.
- Expansion of arable land across downland areas.

The Great Agricultural Depression AD 1870-1914

This, however, was followed by a great depression in agriculture that lasted until 1914, as rising imports of cheap foodstuffs undercut the British farmer.

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

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Major land sales post 1918 break up pattern of land holdings in some areas of the AONB.

The Arts and Crafts Movement AD 1890 - 1920

The Arts and Crafts Movement was an international design movement that originated in Britain. It influenced architecture, domestic design and the decorative arts, using simple forms and a Medieval style of decoration. It advocated truth to materials, traditional craftsmanship and economic reform.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Influence of the gardener Gertrude Jekyll at Boveridge House
- Arts and Crafts influence may be seen in buildings at Witchampton and More Crichel.
- Phillip Speakman Webb, the father of Arts and Craft architecture, designed Clouds House near East Knoyle.

The Ideal of Preserving and Conserving Land and Property for the Nation AD 1900 to the present day

Since 1882 a schedule has been kept of ancient monuments whose preservation is given priority over other land uses. The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act formalises this schedule and introduces the concept of Listed Buildings. The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty was formed in 1895. The RSPB bought its first nature reserve in 1930. The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 formulated the idea of protected landscapes (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and protected habitats (SSSIs), during the 20th

century this has been accompanied by other kinds of protected areas including National Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Melbury Down and Wyn Green gifted to the National Trust
- Stourhead and Kingston Lacy come under National Trust ownerships
- Nature reserves established by the Woodland Trust, RSPB, Natural England and County wildlife trusts.
- Important archaeological sites under English Heritage guardianship.
- Landscape designated as an AONB in 1981 (confirmed in 1983), first AONB wide management plan produced in 2004.

First World War AD 1914-1918

Military conflict from 1914 to 1918 brought the first experience of total war to the population of the AONB.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Kitchener's new armies camp in the Wylde Valleys and on the Fovant Terrace
- Lasting legacy of chalk cap badges, war graves and memorials.

Second World War AD 1939-1945

Military conflict between 1939 and 1945 when the whole of British society was mobilised to contribute to the war effort.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Traditional fingerposts removed and later replaced.
- Military camps established at Blandford and Sutton Veny.

The Cold War and Modern Military Conflict AD 1945 to present

The Cold War and the threat of nuclear war lead to the establishment of new military camps often clouded in an air of secrecy. Modern conflict and the need for continued defence means that there is a continuing military presence in the AONB.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB

- Use of stone quarries for armaments storage at RAF Chilmark and the creation of a branch railway.

Modernist Design AD 1945 to present

Post Second World War modernist styles of building and design develop.

⇒ Impact on the landscape of the AONB



- Modernist design incorporated into buildings in the AONB.



Version 1 December 2010. Written by Emma Rouse, HEAP Officer
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Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Historic Environment Action Plans

www.historiclandscape.co.uk

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