

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ACTION PLAN PROJECT

Summary Characteristics of Themes

1. Ancient Boundaries and Land Ownership
2. Fields in the Landscape
3. Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape
4. Hunting Landscapes
5. Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration & Defence
6. Landscapes of Prehistory
7. Routeways in the Landscape
8. Settlement in the Landscape
9. Woodland and Trees in the Landscape

These summaries aim to describe the key characteristics of each theme. The next step will be to identify issues, threats and opportunities, and to begin to identify actions which may be taken to address these. We look at this next stage in more detail at the steering group meeting.

In the meantime I would be grateful if you look at the theme statements before the meeting.

Do you think that each statement adequately captures the characteristics of the AONB?

Can you think of any additional characteristics which should be emphasised?

A list of maps has also been provided to give an overview of the data which has been captured and displayed to support these descriptions. As you can see there are quite a large number of them so if there are any you would particularly like to comment on then please let me know.

Can you think of any additional maps which may be helpful?

Thank you for your help

Emma

14th December 2009



Maps prepared to accompany the Theme Statements

ANCIENT BOUNDARIES AND LAND OWNERSHIP

1. Late Iron Age Tribal Groupings
2. Approximate Late Roman Administrative boundaries
3. Appearance and spread of Anglo Saxon Culture in the late 5th and 6th Centuries AD
4. Ancient Shire Boundaries
5. Ancient Parish Boundaries
6. Medieval Government the Location of Hundreds
7. Major Landholders of the Medieval Period (pre 1530s)
8. Major Landholders of the Post Medieval Period (post 1530s)

FIELDS IN THE LANDSCAPE

1. Ancient field systems in Wiltshire
2. Overview of Enclosed Land in the AONB

HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS IN THE LANDSCAPE

1. Historic Parks and Gardens
2. Deer Parks

HUNTING LANDSCAPES

1. Medieval Chase and Forests in the vicinity of the AONB
2. Location of the 'walks' in the Cranborne Chase
3. Location of the Inner and Outer Boundaries of the Cranborne Chase

LANDSCAPES OF MILITARISM, COMMEMORATION & DEFENCE

1. Key military sites in the AONB

LANDSCAPES OF PREHISTORY:

1. Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic find spots
2. Bronze Age Round Barrows
3. Neolithic Long Barrows, Causewayed Enclosures and Henges
4. Landscape of the Cursus

ROUTEWAYS IN THE LANDSCAPE:

1. Roads, Tracks, Lanes and Paths in the AONB
2. Date of creation of Turnpike Roads
3. Turnpike Roads in Today's Landscape
4. The Character of Roman Roads between AD1700-1900
5. Roads in Roman Times
6. Roman Roads in Today's Landscape
7. Drove ways in the AONB

SETTLEMENT:

1. Later Prehistoric Settlement
2. Roman Settlement
3. Archaeological evidence for Early Saxon Settlement.
4. Deserted or Shrunken Medieval Settlements
5. Age of today's settlement in the AONB
6. Morphology of today's settlement in the AONB

WOODLAND AND TREES IN THE LANDSCAPE:

1. Woodland in the AONB
2. Origins of all Woodland
3. Woodland Archaeology in the Chase Woodlands

Ancient Boundaries and Land Ownership

“you see a great dike and vallum (Verndike) upon the edges of the hills to the left of Pentridge, to which I suppose it gave name; this crosses the Roman road, and then passes on the other side, upon the division of the hundred.”

William Stukeley 1723

The aims are to provide an overview of the impact that land ownership and ancient boundaries have had on the AONB landscape and on the evidence of physical surviving remains of these activities in today's landscape. The AONB is historically a marginal area on the boundary between peoples, places and identities. This has had an important impact on its historic character.



Bokerley Dyke

Summary of Key Characteristics

- The ancient county boundaries of Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset run through the area. These boundaries are associated with ‘gates’, large trees and coppices, and banks. A network of ancient parish boundaries also sit within this framework, again associated with key ancient trees and in some instances deliberately coinciding with Prehistoric monuments.
- The frontier of Saxon influence in the 6th Century is marked by the Bokerley Dyke. This frontier can also be read in the spread of material culture, and the distribution of Old English and Saxon place names in the landscape. The same approximate area is also the boundary of late Roman Civitates and the furthest eastern extent of the Durotriges in the Iron Age.
- The Medieval systems of land division, the systems of Hundreds, has also had a profound impact on the character of the landscape. In the Early Medieval period these were created independent of county or parish boundaries. These boundaries are not legible in the landscape, but they formed the basis on which land was transferred to ecclesiastical magnates such as the Abbeys of Shaftesbury, Winchester and Glastonbury in the Medieval period. They remained in church lands until the Dissolution when the same land parcels were granted to the nobility. This resulted in a great continuity of both land ownership and groupings of holdings in the AONB landscape.
- The ecclesiastical Medieval pattern of land ownership is represented by the network of ruined houses and other forms of religious houses. The impact of the direct landownership of the religious houses is more subtle, for example, the desertion of the village at Tarrant Rawston was on the orders of the Abbess of Shaftesbury.
- The Post Dissolution pattern of major land ownership is much more legible, for example, in the Hundred of Chalke, inherited by the Earl of Pembroke from Wilton Abbey. The influence of the Wilton Estate can be seen in the establishment of great avenues of trees across the tops of the downland.



HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS IN THE LANDSCAPE

*“O, lose me in the green delightful walks, Of Dodington, thy seat, serene and plain ;
Where simple Nature reigns ; and every view, Diffusive, spreads the pure Dorsetian downs.”*

James Thomson 1730 in reference to Eastbury Park

The aims are to provide an overview of the key archaeological and historic characteristics of the designed parks and gardens of AONB and to focus on evidence of physical surviving remains and historic views in today's landscape.



Philipps House, nestling in Dinton Park

From Medieval deer parks through to 18th century landscape parks and Victorian pleasure gardens. Designed landscapes are an intrinsic part of what makes this living landscape special and are integrally linked to the hunting landscapes of the Cranborne Chase, Groveley and Selwood.

Summary of Key Characteristics

- Nationally important designed landscapes and gardens associated with named designers through the ages such as Capability Brown, Humphrey Repton, Thomas Mawson and Gertude Jekyll. These include:
 - Very large scale 18th and 19th century landscaped parks.
 - More intimate formal gardens with a multi layered history. These include the Victorian pleasure gardens at the Larmer Tree, which are a visual expression of the legacy of the archaeologist Pitt Rivers, and the 19th and 20th century gardens at Cranborne Manor which sit within the frame of early 17th century formal gardens.
- Thirty five historic parks and gardens that are identified on lists compiled by the relevant county Gardens Trust as being of local importance. These are often smaller in scale and more intimate than the Parks and Gardens included on the English Heritage Register.
- All the historic parks and gardens are associated with:
 - the settings of historic grand houses and manors
 - planting and trees, including veteran trees, with the creation of key views and view points both within the landscapes and beyond.
 - listed built garden features including ha-has, temples and grottos and functional buildings with elaborate stylistic elements including carriage houses, walled gardens and lodges.
 - complex histories of redesign, reinvention and remodelling which continues into the 20th century.
- Large number of Medieval deer parks are known in the AONB several of which survive as park pales or have been incorporated into later landscape parks
- Several of the historic parklands form the focus of importance visitor attractions in the AONB, including Longleat and Stourhead. Three are now in National Trust ownership, the rest are still in private hands and access is variable.

- The creation of a new 'modern' designed landscapes such as at Ferne House.



Fields in the Landscape

“But ‘tis more remarkable still: how a great part of these downs come by a new method of husbandry, to be not only made arable, which they never were in former days but to bear excellent wheat”

Daniel Defoe 1725

The aims are to provide an overview of the key archaeological and historic characteristics of fields in the landscape and to focus on the evidence of physical surviving remains in today’s landscape.

From patchworks of ancient field systems to bold strip lynchets which form striking features on the sides of chalk escarpments in low winter light. The pattern of enclosure in the AONB is a key feature of its distinctive character.

The downland areas are characterised by very large fields which contrasts greatly with the smaller more irregular and sinuous fields in the Vale of Wardour and in the chalk valleys.



Parliamentary Fields viewed from Whitesheet hill

Summary of Key Characteristics

- Ancient field systems covering large areas, especially on former downland, dating from the Bronze Age onwards. These are often undated and overlie each other. Many are under the plough but there are surviving pristine examples, such as at Pertwood.
- Prehistoric fields systems surrounding Prehistoric settlements, for example, Iron Age earthworks on the West Wiltshire Downs.
- Striking Medieval lynchets prominent on chalk escarpments, for example, to the north of Mere.
- Less visible, but more extensive, fossilised Medieval strip fields in the vicinity of Martin and in the Gussage Valley.
- Small pre 1800 regular and irregular fields occur across the AONB some of these are locally distinctive such as the irregular curving fields in the vicinity of the Donheads. These are often hedged and associated with copses.
- Field boundaries with mature trees and hedgerows coinciding with ancient parish, and county boundaries.
- Evidence for planned and Parliamentary enclosure of the 18th and 19th century. These fields are especially visible on the greensand terrace at the foot of the Fovant escarpment and in the south east of the AONB near Knowlton. There is a later and a less prominent impact of Parliamentary enclosure in the area bounded by Cranborne Chase, due to the late survival of hunting rights in this area.
- Relic water meadow systems in the bottom of the chalk valleys covering an extensive area and in variable condition.
- 20th century large open fields on downland areas; these are much larger in size and scale than on the Dorset Downs to the west. They are often associated with fences and less mature hedgerows and in some cases have been created through the removal of earlier boundaries.



Hunting Landscapes

“In a highly picturesque Part of the County..an Inviting Spot for a Sporting-Box..situated on the verge of Cranbourne Chase, (now disenfranchised) near Lord River’s Hunting Lodge”

Sale particulars for Woodcotts Farm and Manor – 19th Century

The aims are to provide an overview of the impact that hunting and hunting landscapes have had on the AONB and to focus on the evidence of physical surviving remains of these activities in today’s landscape.

The history of the Cranborne Chase, Medieval hunting forests, fox hunting and game shooting have all contributed to the landscape seen today.



Medieval Manuscript

Summary of Key Characteristics

- A Medieval Hunting Chase and two medieval hunting forests cover the vast majority of the AONB. These are particularly important as the special rules which governed them affected the development of land use and the appearance of the area. This is especially the case with the Cranborne Chase which was not disenfranchised until 1829.
- The Chase as a whole is dotted with Medieval deer parks, and warrens; their relationship with the enveloping chase (in terms of status and function) needs further study.
- The landscape has also been affected by the history of ownership over Chase rights. This was in Crown hands in the Medieval period, but was transferred to the nobility in the Post Medieval period. This period saw five main families vie to control these rights. The changing political fortunes of these families can be read not only in the way the landscape was managed but in the grand houses and parks these families constructed.
- The Inner Chase Bounds centred on Tollard Royal form an area in which these restrictions were most rigorously enforced and were split into a series of five walks. Outside of this main area both Chettered Walk and Alderholt Walk were also important foci within the overall Chase bounds. These walks coincide with surviving areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and lodges.
- Post disenfranchisement fox hunting became the focus of hunting activity in the 19th century. This legacy is still visible in the landscape through place name evidence, the places where coverts were created and the location of kennels.
- Today the hunting legacy continues but the emphasis is on the shooting of peasants and partridge. This activity plays a major part in the rural economy and has had a landscape scale impact with the planting of game cover crops, the creation of game farms and the retention of management of woodland for game.



Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration & Defence

*“There is a green hill down our way, A signal sleeve on verdant ground.
It bears the badges – sen by hand, Modest, simple – nothing grand”*

Extract from 'Fovant Badges' by Nigel Brodrick-Barker

The aims are to provide an overview of the key archaeological and historic characteristics of military and defence activity and to focus on the evidence of physical surviving remains in today's landscape.

From Medieval castles to Cold War ammunition depots the AONB has a varied history of military activity and now is notably associated with the commemoration of fallen soldiers, especially in relation to the First World War.



Fovant Camp 1918
(courtesy of the Fovant
Historical Interest Group)

Summary of Key Characteristics

- First nationally organised militarism in the AONB represented by network of Roman roads (see Routeways Theme) and two Roman forts.
- Medieval fortifications including motte and bailey castles, fortified manor houses and the ruins of Wardour Castle.
- Wardour Castle is associated with the English Civil War when it was under seige.
- Rifle ranges dating from the 19th century onwards.
- Earthworks associated with Military Railways created during World War One, World War Two and in the Cold War period (see Routeways Theme).
- Evidence for large scale temporary camps established in the First World War at both Fovant and Codford, including slight earthworks representing the camps layouts and at least two surviving huts.
- Nationally important group of Chalk Cap Badges at Fovant and single example from Codford. These symbolise the presence of regiments in the area from the First World War onwards and are the focus for yearly ceremonies.
- Remains from the Second World War including camps at Codford and several air fields, including Zeals at which the control tower survives as a house.
- Evidence of post war activity is represented by the now mostly defunct RAF Chilmark, a large complex comprising a light railway, warehouses and underground bomb storage in former stone quarry workings; Knook Camp; and the military camp at Blandford which was first used in the 18th century and is built on the foot print of a 17th century race course.
- World War Two aircraft crash sites which form the focus of local memory and discussions.
- Dedicated War Grave Commission cemeteries associated with War Grave Commission style crosses and inscriptions. These form the focus for yearly ceremonies or remembrance.
- Village war memorials and single War Graves in parish churches.



Landscapes of Prehistory

“Curiously marked with barrows, lynchets, and other mysterious mounds and depressions, where sheep have been pastured for a thousand years without obscuring these chance hieroglyphs scored by men on the surface of the hills”

Hudson 1910

The aims are to provide an overview of the key archaeological and historic characteristics of the evidence for prehistoric activity in the landscape and to focus on evidence of physical surviving remains in today’s landscape.

The AONB has a host of nationally important Prehistoric sites including the great Dorset Cursus and Knowlton Henge, with its ruined Medieval Church nestled in its centre.



Knowlton Henge

Summary of Key Characteristics

- Increasing evidence for Mesolithic activity in the landscape uncovered through field walking especially on the clay with flints on the wooded chalk downland, the greensand terrace, and through the Nadder valley.
- Large numbers of Neolithic Long Barrows, the earliest built monuments in Britain. These cluster in notable concentrations though the Southern Downland Belt and on the edge of the Wylve Valley and have local variations in their construction.
- Complexes of Neolithic monuments. These include the Dorset Cursus, Damerham, Knowlton and the Causewayed Enclosure on Whitesheet Hill.
- Monument complexes provide a key focus for later Prehistoric activity
- Large numbers of Bronze Age Round Barrows but notably absent from the Vale of Wardour.
- Later Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements in the centre of extensive field systems. For example across the West Wiltshire Downs.
- Fourteen Iron Age Hillforts with discrete concentrations. These are small in scale often consisting of only one bank and ditch. Several of the hillforts are visually prominent in the landscape e.g. Winkelbury Hill.
- Key caches of palaeoenvironmental information buried in the chalk valleys and sealed under Long Barrows. The excavation of the Fir Tree Shaft at Down Farm underlines the wealth of information which can be drawn from such information.
- A legacy of Antiquarian, 19th century and modern inquiry and research providing the ‘Cranborne Chase’ with a distinct identity in terms of prehistoric monuments and their study.



Historic Environment
Action Plans

ROUTEWAYS IN THE LANDSCAPE

“a traveller is highly indebted to your lordship for adding to his pleasure and advantage, in receiving the Roman method of placing a numbered stone at every mile, and the living index of a tree to make it more observable”

William Stukeley 1723

The aims of this document are not to provide a potted history of the travel in the AONB but instead to provide an overview of the key historic characteristics of the network of routeways in the AONB and to focus on evidence of physical surviving remains in today's landscape. From linear Roman roads, high airy Ridgeway's, sunken hollow ways, and green lane routeways all are intrinsic parts of what makes this living landscape special.



Tisbury Station 1961

Reproduced with the permission of the Tisbury Local History Society

Summary of Key Characteristics

- Complex system of roads, paths and bridleways, especially dense though the Vale of Wardour, Cranborne Chase and chalk valley bottoms but open and widely spread in other areas.
- Number of routes across formerly open downland and former common land condensed into one legal Right of Way.
- Large numbers of green lanes, sunken lanes, and braided routes.
- Historic fords and clapper bridges marking historic crossing points survive in chalk valley bottoms but are often now secondary routes.
- Key east-west ancient track ways and routeways following the higher Chalk ridges in use at least from the Medieval period. These possibly have Pre Roman origins. Highly visible and often contentious features of the landscape existing as byways and bridleways for much of their length.
- Legacy of access routes striking directly up the slopes onto downland areas from lower ground.
- The Roman Road between Badbury Rings and Old Sarum, known as the Ackling Dyke, is a highly legible feature in the landscape and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument along much of its length. Badbury Rings is also an important landscape feature not just as an Iron Age Hill Fort but also a major Roman Road junction.
- Modern network of main roads established by the Turnpike Trusts AD 1700-1800. Legacy still present in the landscape through network of Toll Houses, milestones and mileposts, though often not visible.
- Two 19th century railways still key features and communication routes through the AONB.
- Importance of lost railway branch lines relating to 20th century military activity under appreciated.
- Relatively small impact of 20th century road improvements with the exception of the A303 and junction with A36.



SETTLEMENT IN THE LANDSCAPE

“I was, therefore, somewhat filled with curiosity to see this Steeple Langford again; and indeed, it was the recollection of this village that made me take a ride into Wiltshire this summer.”

William Cobbett 1826

The aim is to provide an overview of the key archaeological and historic characteristics of the built heritage and settlements of the AONB and to focus on evidence of physical surviving remains in today's landscape.



From grand houses, Medieval halls and churches to historic farmsteads and estate cottages, the distinctive style of the built environment is an intrinsic part of what makes this living landscape special.

Ashmore

Summary of Key Characteristics

- Rich vernacular architecture using local building materials including flint, brick, greensand, Tisbury and Chilmark stone, timber-framing, etc and local thatching and roofing styles.
- Diverse range of settlement plans including nucleated villages, linear, irregular, dispersed and on the edge of common land with distinct geographical distributions.
- Location of settlements linked to landform and local climate.
- Overarching influence of ‘estate’ style in some places. This varies in scale from isolated buildings, groups of cottages at the edge of settlements and entire villages.
- Later Prehistoric settlement often at the centre of extensive field systems.
- Clusters of Romano-British settlement along the West Wiltshire Downs, though the wooded downland of the Cranborne Chase and in the vicinity of Badbury Rings. Scattered evidence for higher status buildings including at least two Roman Villas.
- Anglo-Saxon charters suggest that many of the modern settlements within the AONB have Early Medieval origin.
- Large number of shrunken and deserted Medieval Villages
- Majority of settlements with surviving Medieval plan at their core.
- Several planned Medieval villages, including Hindon and Steeple Langford.
- Large churches at the centre of villages often with Medieval building fabric often heavily modified in the 19th century.
- Large complexes of farm buildings located both in isolated positions and on the edge of settlements.
- Manor houses and Medieval halls representing the original ‘Demense’ often at the core of the original village.
- Large historic country houses of several main phases associated with a wide range of ancillary buildings. Often with complex history of development and rebuilding. These are often separate from main settlement.
- New 19th century settlements and hamlets situated as satellite villages.
- Settlements small in scale with some having undergone infilling in the 20th Century e.g. Dinton, and Pimperne.



Woodland and Trees in the Landscape

“a truly venerable tract of forest land, one of the few remaining woodlands in England of undoubted primeval date”

Thomas Hardy 1891

The aim is to provide an overview of the key archaeological and historic characteristics of the woodland and trees in the AONB and to focus on evidence of physical surviving remains in today's landscape. The AONB is characterised by large swathes of ancient woodland, designed woodland elements also dominate.



Summary of Key Characteristics

- Ancient broad leaved woodland which coincide with key areas of the Medieval hunting chase and Medieval forests.
- The ancient woodlands are associated with archaeological earthworks including ancient field systems.
- The Cranborne Chase Woodlands centred on Tollard Royal form the centre of an important, and in some places, surviving underwood industry.
- The ancient woodland on Great Ridge forms the only large area of ancient semi-natural woodland not associated with a Medieval hunting area.
- Ancient copses exist at the bottom of Chalk escarpments, known locally as 'Ivers' and are of unknown antiquity.
- Copses and mature hedgerows around fields marking the location of woodland clearance especially notable in the Vale of Wardour.
- Ancient and veteran trees associated with Medieval Deer Parks, Parkland and ancient boundaries.
- Large scale planting of Trees and woodland belts associated with the creation of 18th and 19th century landscape parks. This is best demonstrated by the construction of the great Brownian Ride at Wimborne St Giles and by Longleat.
- Woodlands formed structural planned elements in the landscape characterised by great avenues of trees, for example at Kingston Lacy and in the Chalke Valley.
- Large scale plantations of conifers especially in the 19th century and post 1918, for example to the east of Longleat. These mark the impact of the great estates on the landscape.
- Increase in woodland cover in the downland areas in the 20th century, characterised by the creation of linear and angular plantations and belts of trees for fox and game coverts.

