

Overarching Topic F - People in the Landscape

People are central to the story of the development and evolution of the AONB:

- Changes in the demographics of the population of the landscape through time can have a major influence on landscape character.
- Leading noble families shaped the estates which they owned through successive generations, and increasingly their individual sense of style and taste had a profound impact on the designed and built aspects of the landscape, supported by professional landscape and parkland designers.
- Named historical figures can become associated with particular locations giving an added dimension to their sense of place and added historical value.
- Artists, poets and writers derive inspiration from the landscape and their work, in turn spreads awareness and connection to the landscape.
- Travellers across the landscape capture moments in time and periods of great change.

Noble families associated with the AONB

Barons Arundells of Wardour created in 1605; line became extinct in 1944. The Barons took their title from Wardour Castle in Wiltshire

Earls of Pembroke (Herberts of Wilton) created 1551. Their main family seat is at Wilton House.

Earls of Somerset, created 1588; are major land holders at Maiden Bradley.

Earls of Salisbury (Cecils of Cranborne) created in 1605 by James I. The Cecil's gain control of the lordship of Cranborne Chase.

Earls of Shaftesbury, Ashleys of Wimborne St Giles created in 1672. Their main family seat is St Giles House.

William Beckford (1709-1770) and William Thomas Beckford (1760-1844) owned the Fonthill estates.

Frekes of Iwerne Courtney, substantial local family during the 16th and 17th century at one time leased Cranborne Manor. They failed in the male line and passed the rights of the lordship of Cranborne Chase to the Pitt-Rivers family.

Hoare's of Stourhead (18th century to present), bought Stourhead in 1717 from the Barons of Stourton. They created the current house and parkland at Stourhead.

Marquesses of Bath, (Thynnes of Longleat) created 1789. Their main family seat is Longleat House.

Farquharsons, wealthy newcomers to the Cranborne Chase establishing themselves at Shapwick in 1717.

Penruddocke, wealthy local family in the 17th and 18th century, based at Compton Chamberlayne.

Named designers associated parks, gardens and buildings of the AONB

Robert Smythson (c1536-1614) English architect, designed the mansion at Longleat and remodelled Old Wardour Castle.

Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726) English architect, was commissioned to build a large country house at Eastbury in 1716. Today only the kitchen and servants quarters remain

Charles Bridgeman (1690-1738) English garden designer, created early c18th formal gardens and parkland at Eastbury House

Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-83) English Landscape architect, laid out extensive parkland at Longleat, gave advice and inspired many of the other parklands in the AONB.

James Paine (1717-1789) English architect, who designed Wardour Castle in early 18th century

Humphry Repton (1752-1818) English Landscape architect, prepared a Red Book for Longleat.

Thomas Mawson (1861-1933) British garden designer, created the formal gardens at Boveridge.

Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) British garden designer, created the planting scheme for Boveridge.

Alison (1928-1993) and Peter Smithson (1923-2003) architects, several examples of their modernist designs exist in the Vale of Wardour.

A selection of historical figures associated with the AONB

King Alfred (849-899) was King of Wessex between 871 and 899. The rallying of troops for the Battle of Ethandun is associated with the area on the Wiltshire, Dorset and Somerset border near Penselwood. A boundary stone known as 'Egbert's Stone' is associated with the gathering. The association was reinforced, marked by the building of King Alfred's Tower in 1772 on the Stourhead estate.

King John (1167-1216) is one of the Medieval Kings known to have hunted across Cranborne Chase. His name is still associated with King Johns House, a former hunting lodge in the village of Tollard Royal.

Sir John Davies (1539-1626) is associated with the area, and was an English poet and lawyer.

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 which he was born is known as 'Wren's Shop'. Sir Christopher Wren's Master Mason, Edward Strong, was also born in East Knoyle where he built a cottage and farm.

William Thomas Beckford (1760-1844) 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.

William Barnes (1801-1886) was a poet born near Pentridge in 1800 and was later a rector and schoolteacher at Mere. He wrote many poems in Dorset dialect and reflected on county life and character.

Lieutenant-General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers (1827–1900) inherited Rushmore in 1880 when Horace, the sixth and last Lord Rivers died. With his inheritance, General Pitt-Rivers was able to indulge in his main interest – that of archaeology. Pitt-Rivers is known as the ‘father of archaeology’.

Heywood Sumner (1853-1940), a member of the Arts and Crafts Movement who retired to the edge of the area in 1902. In addition to writing a series of topographical books, Sumner rapidly became a leading archaeologist, continuing the high standards of excavation and recording established by Pitt-Rivers. His experience as an illustrator is reflected in the fine prints, maps and plans that many of his publications contain.

Sir Anthony Eden (1897–1977) was British Prime Minister from 1955 to 1957. He retired to Alvediston and is buried in the churchyard.

Rolf Gardiner (1902-1971) took over Gore Farm from his uncle the composer Henry Balfour Gardiner (1877-1950) in 1924 and bought Springhead, Fontmell Magna in 1933. Rolf Gardiner was one of the pioneers of the organic farm movement and a founder of the Soil Association.

Cecil Beaton (1904 – 1980) was an English fashion and portrait photographer. For fifteen years between 1930 and 1945, Beaton leased Ashcombe House in Wiltshire, where he entertained many notable figures.

Sir John Eliot Gardiner (1943-) is an English conductor born at Fontmell Magna, Dorset.

The inspiration derived from the landscape

James Thomson (1700-1748) poet, was inspired by the parks and gardens at Eastbury.

William Chafin (c. 1818) country parson, who collected anecdotes of life on the Cranborne Chase.

Argentinean born W H Hudson (1841-1922) based his book *A Shepherd's Life* (1910) on his conversations with a shepherd named Dawes from Martin. In this book, Hudson renamed the village Winterbourne Bishop.

Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) described the Cranborne Chase in his novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891).

Desmond Hawkins (1908 – 1999) was an author, editor and radio personality and wrote the definitive book on the Cranborne Chase (1980).

Edwin Smith (1912-1971) photographer of English gardens, landscapes and architecture worked in the AONB.

Antiquarians and Archaeologists have explored ancient monuments of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs since the 15th century. This is explored further in Overarching Topic C: History of Archaeological Discovery

Travellers through the AONB landscape

William Camden (1551-1623) was an English antiquarian, historian, and officer of arms. He wrote the first topographical survey of the islands of Great Britain and Ireland including the counties of Wiltshire, and Hampshire.

John Aubrey (1626-1697) was an English antiquarian and writer. He wrote topographical descriptions of the county of Wiltshire. These were later incorporated into a manuscript called "The Natural History of Wiltshire" in 1846.

Cela Fiennes (1662 -1741) was an English traveller born in Wiltshire whose travel writings include descriptions of travels between the market towns across the edge of the AONB.

William Cobbett (1763 – 1835) saw himself as a champion of traditional rural society against the transformation due to the Industrial Revolution. He took to riding around the country on horseback making observations of what was happening in the towns and villages. *Rural Rides*, first appeared in serial form in the Political Register running from 1822 to 1826. It was published in book form in 1830. It features descriptions particularly of the chalk river valleys of the AONB.

Daniel Defoe (1659-1731) was an English writer, journalist, and pamphleteer, His three volume travel book; *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* was published between 1724 and 1727, and was innovative partly because Defoe had actually visited the places he described. His descriptions of the downland of the AONB are particularly evocative.

Sir Frederick Treves (1853-1923) was a prominent British Surgeon who in 1906 wrote a book exploring the history of the Highways and Byways of Dorset. In 1928 E Hutton wrote a similar book for Wiltshire entitled *the Highways and Byways in Wiltshire*.

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