

Exmoor National Park  
Historic Environment Report Series No 1

# THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH FRAMEWORK FOR EXMOOR 2010-15



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Exmoor National Park  
Historic Environment Report Series

This report series includes interim reports, policy documents and other information relating to the historic environment of Exmoor National Park.

Further hard copies of this report can be obtained from the Exmoor National Park Historic Environment Record:  
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## THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH FRAMEWORK FOR EXMOOR 2010-15

### SUMMARY

This document builds on the Historic Environment Research Framework 2004-9 (which was itself the first ever policy document informing research into Exmoor's historic environment). It falls into two parts: firstly, it summarises the progress made in achieving the objectives of the Framework for 2004-9, and secondly, it identifies the research priorities for Exmoor's historic environment over the next five years (2010-2015).

### THIS DOCUMENT

This document builds on the Research Framework 2004-9. Its starting point is a review of progress made against that document: its priorities and its objectives. It is not an exhaustive, detailed account of all current research, but a broad overview of the most significant progress, setting out agreed priorities for research into Exmoor's historic environment.

This document has been produced by the Historic Environment Service at Exmoor National Park Authority after a workshop session held in Dulverton in March 2009 involving a range of stakeholders: local individuals, groups and bodies as well as local, regional and national agencies and local authorities.

The Framework is there to guide and assist in the prioritising of research into the historic environment for,

- i) the benefit of the community of Exmoor,
- ii) those who have a role in the management and curation of the resource
- iii) anyone who is interested in Exmoor and its past.

The Framework will be formally revisited and updated every five years (or more frequently) during its life.

It is available in hard copy or via the National Park Authority's website: [info@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:info@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk). For further information please contact:

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### FRONT COVER

Dunster. The medieval town, with the medieval castle behind (remodelled by Anthony Salvin in the 1860s).



# PART 1

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# PROGRESS IN DELIVERING THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH FRAMEWORK 2004-9

## **The Exmoor National Park Management Plan 2007-12**

The Research Framework 2004-9 is being delivered in part through the Exmoor National Park Management Plan (2007-12) objectives and targets. The overarching objective is that 'by 2020 there is an enhanced knowledge of the historic environment of Exmoor...'. Objective C1 is 'To undertake a programme of research to improve knowledge of the cultural heritage and historic environment of Exmoor'. Seven targets to be delivered during the life of the Plan have been set to achieve the objective. These are:

C1.1 'Understanding of the ages of key monuments will be improved...through dendrochronological sampling, radiocarbon dating, artefact analysis and targeted historical research...'

C1.2 'The archaeological deposits exposed by sea level change and coastal erosion in Porlock Bay will be preserved by record...utilising excavation and palaeo-environmental sampling...'

C1.3 'Knowledge about the origins of existing settlements and settlement patterns on Exmoor will be increased...'

C1.4 'Knowledge of Exmoor's earliest hunter gatherer landscapes on the coast will be enhanced and understanding of the complex Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements and society which form such an important part of Exmoor's historic environment will be increased...'

C1.5 'A survey of pollen and plant remains found in peat in Exmoor's deepest valley mires will be completed...to increase understanding of Exmoor's past environments...'

C1.6 'Understanding of the character of Exmoor's historic farmsteads, especially their economic and social basis, will be increased...'

C1.7 'Digital mapping of archaeological features and landscapes from air photographs will be available for the whole of Exmoor...as part of the National Mapping Programme...'

### **Current Research Projects which are delivering the Research Framework**

**Exmoor Iron** A four year research project (completed in 2005) carried out by the University of Exeter to investigate the evidence for early iron working on Exmoor. The project was funded by English Heritage.

**England's Past for Everyone on Exmoor** A local history (completed in 2009) project to research the medieval and later history of the former Royal Forest and adjoining parishes south-eastwards to Dulverton (11 parishes in all). The project has been delivered by Somerset Victoria County History (Somerset County Council), The University of London and Exmoor National Park Authority, with support from North Devon District Council and the Exmoor Society. The project led to a publication - *Exmoor, the Making of an English Upland* - in June 2009, as well as educational packages for local schools where appropriate. A significant volunteer component recorded the remains of farm buildings, deserted farmsteads and green lanes. A small oral history project was also completed.

**The Somerset Victoria County History.** The VCH is concentrating on the Hundred of Carhampton and currently (2009) is researching the history of Dunster.

**The Exmoor Archaeology Field School** is a research project run by the University of Bristol's Archaeology Department and Exmoor National Park Authority to examine the Mesolithic coastal landscape on Exmoor and especially the site at Hawkcombe Head (near Porlock).

**The sustainable Management of Upland Valley Mires** A palaeo-environmental sampling project run by the University of Plymouth to sample and analyse the nature and condition of upland valley mires on Exmoor. The project is supported by the Great Western Research Council and Exmoor National Park's Sustainable Development Fund.

**Exmoor Miniliths Project** A project (begun in 2007) to examine the Neolithic/Bronze Age transition on Exmoor. It focuses on the stone settings and their associated monuments and landscapes. The project is run by the Universities of Leicester and Bristol.

**The Parracombe Project** is a long term research project being carried out by the North Devon Archaeological Society to examine the development of the landscape around Parracombe. The work includes field boundary survey,



### IS THE VISION SET OUT IN THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH FRAMEWORK 2004-9 BEING ACHIEVED?

The following table summarises the vision for the Research Framework and shows whether that vision is being achieved, and if not, why not.

VISION	EVIDENCE (Examples)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A series of multi-disciplinary research projects, drawing on and helping to develop up-to-date methodologies.</li> </ul>	England's Past for Everyone Valley Mires project Miniliths Project	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research carried out by a broad spectrum of individuals, groups, societies and organisations.</li> </ul>	National organisations Universities Societies Individuals	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The results of research pooled and disseminated in a timely fashion.</li> </ul>	Delays in agreeing funding to publish the Exmoor Iron project. All other major projects have published interim or full reports.	Partly achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A continuing, rigorous re-appraisal of our knowledge.</li> </ul>	An Exmoor Historic Environment Research Group is needed to ensure rigour in this process	Partly achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research projects which involve the local community wherever appropriate, providing a range of learning opportunities.</li> </ul>	England's Past for Everyone NMP liaison group Larkbarrow 2008 Valley Mires Project NB Furthering this aspect of the vision should be a priority for the next 5 years	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● These results underpinning high quality sustainable management of the historic environment.</li> </ul>	Miniliths project leading to stone conservation. West Somerset Mineral Railway. Moorland Initiative	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interpretation that flows from and closely reflects the results of this up-to-date, high quality research.</li> </ul>	Dunster Pottery Kiln Timberscombe hillfort Exmoor Iron West Somerset Mineral Railway	Achieved

excavation, building recording and historical research. A major excavation has been carried out on the Bronze Age/Iron Age enclosure site at Holworthy.

**The Palaeo-environmental Survey Programme** is a small scale programme of sampling, palaeo-environmental analyses and dating funded by the Exmoor National Park Authority. It aims to support the research objectives of the Authority and others by facilitating carefully targeted analysis and dating to answer specific research questions.

**Exmoor National Park National Mapping Programme Project** A project to examine, map and interpret Exmoor's landscape from existing air photographs. The project is led by Exmoor National Park Authority with 100% funding from English Heritage, and was completed in July 2009.

**Exmoor Air Photography Programme** is a joint English Heritage/Exmoor National Park Authority project to carry out an annual series of sorties to obtain air photographs of upstanding archaeological sites for monitoring and management purposes.

#### **Exmoor National Park Historic Environment Record**

The development of a public HER focused on the area of Exmoor National Park has taken place as a fundamental tool in managing, conserving and researching Exmoor's historic environment. In May 2008 an HER Officer was appointed by Exmoor National Park Authority. On 1 April 2009 the HER became public for the first time. By the end of 2009 the HER will be online.

**The Porlock Beach and Marsh Project** is a low level but long term programme designed to monitor and record archaeological features and palaeo-environmental deposits exposed by the process of coastal change on Porlock Beach. Small scale excavation and associated palaeo-environmental sampling takes place as necessary.

#### **University Placement Scheme and Research Dissertations**

The Universities of Bristol and Exeter both regularly encourage research at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Cumulatively these are making a significant contribution to our knowledge of Exmoor's historic environment. Student Work Placements are offered at Exmoor National Park Authority to advance both research and conservation objectives.

#### **Exmoor Farmsteads Project**

A project to record Exmoor's farmsteads with volunteers led by an expert. The project builds on the methodology developed for England's Past for Everyone on Exmoor. It is run by Exmoor National Park Authority.

## PROGRESS IN ADVANCING THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH FRAMEWORK 2004-9 - PRIORITY BY PRIORITY

### 1. Chronology

Substantial progress in obtaining dates from excavations and valley mires.

The HER will ensure that all dates are recorded in one place and these should be published annually from 2010. However, there is still considerable progress needed in order to provide the robust chronological framework envisaged.

*Future Progress: Remains a priority.  
A dendrochronological programme is still needed.*

### 2. Sea level change and coastal erosion

Porlock Beach and Marsh have been monitored continuously but require continued monitoring. A new strategy for the archaeology of the beach and marsh has been produced which recommends an analysis and publication of the research carried out to date (over the last 11 years). The Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment has been completed for the Exmoor coast as far as Gore Point. Nothing west of Gore Point has been done.

*Future Progress: RCZA for Exmoor coast west of Gore Point is required*

### 3. Origin and development of settlements

The England's Past for Everyone Project has delivered a considerable increase in knowledge about Exmoor's settlements; the results of the research published in a timely fashion in June 2009. However, the project focused on southern Exmoor and VCH are now concentrating on Dunster - the remaining settlements have yet to be studied. Broadly speaking there is little integrated research on this priority and more focus is needed.

*Future Progress: An historical survey of Exmoor's coastal settlements is still needed.*

#### 4. Relict Prehistoric Landscapes

A series of projects have given major new insights into the prehistoric period on Exmoor from the Late Mesolithic to the Roman period. Work on the Mesolithic at Hawkcombe Head has led to the discovery of at least 6 new sites elsewhere on Exmoor. The Miniliths project is the first substantial piece of research ever to have been carried out in to Exmoor's stone settings and their context. The excavations at the Bronze Age/Iron Age site at Holworthy are the first major area excavations on one of Exmoor's prehistoric monuments since the 1970s. The site is due to be published during 2009/10 in the Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society. The National Mapping Programme has revealed a number of previously unrecorded sites. News sites have been identified and considerable effort has been made by English Heritage survey staff to record these landscapes: Little Hangman, Codsand Moors, Warcombe Water, Trout Hill and so on. A programme of analysis to identify Areas of Exceptional Archaeological and Historic Importance on Exmoor's moorlands has been completed.

*Future Progress:*      *Remains a priority.*

Give consideration to a research strategy for the prehistoric landscape (focused on moorlands?)

#### 5. Re-assessment of existing museum collections

Virtually no progress has been made.

*Future Progress:*      *Remains a priority.*

### SETTLEMENTS

#### (6.i) Settlement morphology and characterisation

*Future Progress:*      *little progress – Historic Landscape Characterisation is an under-used tool here.*

#### (6.ii) Iron Age enclosures

Excavations at Higher Holworthy

#### (6.iii) Dunster

Excavations and recording around the Tithe Barn. Work by Somerset VCH

*Future Progress: Consider urban project to encompass building recording, topo survey, geophysics etc.*

- (6.iv) Post medieval desertions  
England's Past for Everyone

## **RESOURCE EXPLOITATION**

- (7.i) Combe Martin silver lead industry  
Excavations in Combe Martin (outside NP)
- (7.ii) Bampfylde copper mining landscape  
No progress
- (7.iii) The lime industry  
No progress
- (7.iv) Harbours and havens  
No progress
- (7.v) Woodlands  
Substantial survey work by Judith Cannell; Exmoor Iron excavations in Horner Wood, Shircombe and Blacklake
- (7.vi) The Iron industry  
Exmoor Iron has made substantial progress here. Over 5 tonnes of slag samples have been collected and constitute a major research resource. However, the fieldwork has not been published yet. This lack of dissemination is a major obstacle.  
  
The 19th century iron industry on the Brendon Hills has been researched in detail by Mike Jones and funding secured for a major publication in late 2009.

## FARMING

(8.i) Exmoor's field systems

Historic Landscape Characterisation is not used. National Mapping Programme has systematically recorded relict field systems for the first time. Martin Gillard's PhD thesis has never been published and is not easily available but is still the most insightful work on Exmoor's field systems.

(8.ii) Ancient breeds

No Progress

(8.iii) Field gutter systems

The National Mapping Programme has accurately mapped and recorded all of Exmoor's field gutter systems

(8.iv) Reclamation

The impact of reclamation has been mapped by the National Mapping Programme project and this subject will form the basis of a book which will be the dissemination element of NMP.

A bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund has been developed which includes a project on the history of the Royal Forest. The bid was submitted at the end of August 2009. A decision will be announced early in 2010

(8.v) Customs and traditions associated with the farming industry (including oral history)

A small oral history project - interviewing farmers - has been completed under the England's Past for Everyone Project. It is aimed to role this project out over the coming years.

A small oral history project has been included within a bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund under its Landscape Partnership Scheme. The bid was submitted at the end of August 2009. A decision will be announced early in 2010

## COMMUNICATION & TRANSPORT

- (9.i) Packhorse tracks  
No progress, but NMP has mapped old routeways.
  
- (9.ii) Bridges  
England's Past for Everyone has made some progress here; NMP has mapped old routeways.

## RITUAL AND RELIGION

- (10.i) Stone settings and standing stones generally  
Miniliths Project is investigating Exmoor's standing stones - the first major project ever to do so.
  
- (10.ii) Burial mounds: barrows and cairns  
Stone cairns form part of the Miniliths Project. Further work is needed – perhaps targeted at Scheduled Monuments in poor condition.
  
- (10.iii) Early Christianity  
No progress
  
- (10.iv) Churches and churchyards  
No progress
  
- (10.v) Holy wells  
No progress

## ESTATES AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

- (11.i) Ashley Combe  
No progress
  
- (11.ii) Dunster  
No progress

- (11.iii) Simonsbath House  
Assessment of the designed landscape and proposals for its restoration have been commissioned
  
- (11.iv) Chargot House  
No progress
  
- (11.v) Combe Sydenham  
No progress
  
- (11.vi) Nettlecombe  
No progress
  
- (11.vii) Glenthorne  
No progress

## **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

- (12.i) Thatch  
No progress
  
- (12.ii) Traditional building techniques  
No progress
  
- (12.iii) Medieval buildings on Exmoor  
England's Past for Everyone has made some progress in understanding the historical context of buildings on Exmoor. More fieldwork is needed to identify the remains of medieval buildings on Exmoor.
  
- (12.iv) Arts & Crafts movement  
No progress



## **SOCIAL HISTORY**

### **(13.i) Tourism**

England's Past for Everyone has made some progress and devoted part of its publication to this subject.

### **(13.ii) Oral History**

England's Past for Everyone has made some progress by establishing a methodology for interviewing farmers, and by carrying out a pilot series of interviews.

## **DEFENCE AND OFFENCE (MILITARY AND NAVAL)**

### **(14.i) Nineteenth century and WWI**

No progress

### **(14.ii) WWII**

National Mapping Programme has recorded and mapped all visible WWII sites and features, including the discovery of a number of previously unrecorded sites and defining, for the first time, the extent of the Exmoor Firing Ranges.

### **(14.iii) Cold War**

No progress

### **(14.iv) Roman [new priority]**

Roman forts were not identified as a priority in the Research Framework as none were known on Exmoor. However, over the last 5 years the possible fort at Rainsbury Farm, Upton has been subject to geophysical survey. This has confirmed its Roman date and identified a massive annex to the fort.

*Future Progress: Further excavation is necessary at the site to establish more about the function of the annex.*

## KEY METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Research priorities need to be delivered through appropriate methodologies. The lack of previous work on Exmoor means that in some areas the development of effective techniques is still a priority. Research ideas should ideally incorporate some of the following methods and techniques:

1. Integrated, multi-disciplinary approach

*Progress: There are exemplars of this approach on Exmoor: eg the Miniliths Project and the Valley Mires Project.*

2. Scientific dating

*Progress: A large number of C14 dates have been obtained over the life of the Framework. However, this information needs to be more available and its collection extended.*

3. Geophysical survey

*Progress: This technique is being widely used and generally yields excellent results. It has been used on moorland soils and has demonstrated its potential here (eg Hawkcombe Head and Lanacombe). Ground Penetrating Radar has also been used (eg Roman Lode) and its application needs to be further trialled on a range of monument types.*

4. Palaeo-environmental sampling

*Progress: Substantial progress has been made in this area both in specific projects (Valley Mires Project), and in the application of environmental techniques on other projects.*

5. Selective excavation at key sites  
*Progress: Some progress here.*
  
6. Dendrochronology on buildings  
*Progress: Little progress.*
  
7. GIS-based HBSMR to assimilate information  
*Progress: An HER for Exmoor National Park has been established and went public on 1 April 2009. It went online through HeritageGateway in December 2009.*
  
8. Detailed building recording  
*Progress: England's Past for Everyone commissioned highly detailed surveys of four farmsteads, whilst EPE volunteers recorded another 30 examples. The volunteer component has been continued as an Exmoor NPA project run by Isabel Richardson. Mike Jones' detailed surveys of industrial structures on the Brendon Hills will be published in April 2010, and are also now online at [westsomersetmineralrailway.org.uk](http://westsomersetmineralrailway.org.uk).*
  
9. Characterisation surveys  
*Progress: No progress.*
  
10. Fieldwalking  
*Progress: Little systematic progress.*
  
11. Air photography on soil mark and crop mark sites  
*Progress: These sites have been targeted with limited success, but have the potential for further targetting.*
  
12. Geochemical survey  
*Progress: No progress.*

# PART II

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# THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH FRAMEWORK FOR EXMOOR 2010-15

## VISION

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- A series of multi-disciplinary research projects, drawing on and helping to develop up-to-date methodologies.
- Research carried out by a broad spectrum of individuals, groups, societies and organisations.
- The results of research pooled and disseminated in a timely fashion.
- A continuing, rigorous re-appraisal of our knowledge.
- Research projects which involve the local community wherever possible, providing a range of learning opportunities for all.
- These results underpinning high quality sustainable management of the historic environment.
- Interpretation that flows from and closely reflects the results of this up-to-date, high quality research.
- An Historic Environment Record for Exmoor National Park which underpins and pools the research of individuals and organisations, by being up-to-date and accessible to all.



**A team from the Universities of Leicester and Bristol excavating a Bronze Age cairn on Lanacombe in August 2009**

### **The Purpose of Research**

Exmoor's landscape has been profoundly shaped by people over the last 8000 years. The layers of previous human activity contribute to the variety of Exmoor's landscape and its special qualities; they also tell the story of human exploitation and activity on and around the moor through time.

The purpose of research into the historic environment is to improve understanding of the physical remains in the landscape, both above and below ground. Research should also be directed towards artefacts and artefact collections, as well as historical and oral sources. Through better understanding, improved management strategies can be put in place which will help to conserve the resource. The interpretation that flows from high quality research will shape our view of Exmoor's past and build an appreciation of Exmoor's special qualities today.

### **What is the historic environment?**

Exmoor's historic environment comprises the entire historic and prehistoric landscape: archaeological sites and monuments, buried archaeological deposits, historic buildings, historic field patterns, objects and artefacts, historical sources, customs and traditions, and oral history. It also includes waterlogged deposits, such as coastal marshes and upland peat bogs and valley mire sites which contain information about past environments.

### **Why is Exmoor's historic environment special?**

- It uniquely contributes to Exmoor's special character, through the use of local building materials, and through the past management of the entire landscape (moorlands, woodlands and farmed land)
- Exmoor is a marginal landscape (and has a resulting dynamism in terms of past farming systems and settlements). Related to this, it also contains relict landscapes from prehistory to medieval times, which are only paralleled on the south west's other moorlands. These landscapes are a very rare survival nationally
- It has great, largely untapped palaeo-environmental potential
- It has a dispersed settlement pattern, representative of the south west of England
- Exmoor's coastline, which plays a major part in its economy and tourism industry, has a high concentration of historic features (which play an especially significant role in shaping its distinctiveness)

### **Regional frameworks and strategies**

The South West Archaeological Research Framework (SWARF) was published in 2008 (Webster C J ed). It provides the regional context for the Exmoor Historic Environment Research Framework 2009-14. Relevant research themes from SWARF are indicated below.

It is clear that in setting priorities for research into Exmoor's historic environment a two way process is in play: firstly, regional, national (and international) research frameworks and strategies will help to focus priorities on Exmoor, but equally from within Exmoor the nature of the evidence itself and the expertise of those engaged in its study, identify priorities for research. It is therefore important that sub-regional research frameworks exist, and that they seek to pursue a fine grained approach in balance with wider priorities.

## RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR EXMOOR 2010-2015

We have identified key research priorities. Some of these remain long term goals which should underpin nearly all the research that is done. Others represent more time-limited priorities (we have related them, where applicable, to the South West Archaeological Research Framework):

### 1. Chronology

To improve the chronological framework for archaeological sites and buildings by increasing the number of sites, structures and places dated by reliable archaeological methods, and to make that objective explicit in project designs.

SWARF research aim 16 (p281)

### 2. Sea level change, coastal erosion and climate change

To identify all elements of the historic environment which are threatened by sea level rise, coastal erosion and climate change. To adequately record and understand landscapes, archaeological features, artefacts and deposits which are threatened by sea level rise, coastal erosion and climate change.

To carry out adequate recording and sampling of archaeological deposits threatened by sea level change, coastal erosion and climate change. Preserve, through sampling or excavation of organic material (such as wood and bone), environmental deposits, boats, other structures related to maritime and other industries, as well as the remains of the earliest periods (such as the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic).

SWARF research aim 23 (p285)

### 3. Origin and development of settlements in the medieval period

To understand the origin and development of existing settlements on and around Exmoor by carrying out multi-disciplinary projects to investigate the origins of existing settlements and settlement patterns on Exmoor.

SWARF research aim 4f (p278)



#### 4. Relict Prehistoric Landscapes

Exmoor's relict prehistoric landscapes - standing stones, barrows and cairns, hut circles, field systems and hill-slope enclosures - are a remarkable survival. Some aspects of the prehistoric landscape have been covered under other research priorities in this document. However, it is important to pull together these separate strands and to see them in the context of the wide resource.

Exmoor's prehistoric landscapes have received little attention in the past, with the result that chronologies are vague; the form and function of monuments also requires further recording and analysis. Some aspects of the prehistoric landscape are particularly vulnerable - such as stone settings.

Amongst other priorities, selective excavation is required to allow sites to be placed in a tighter chronological framework and to better understand form and function. Further palaeo-environmental sampling is required – both from archaeological deposits during excavation and from mire sites – to develop our understanding of contemporary environments, and in particular changing woodland cover and the nature of prehistoric farming (there is some evidence for pastoralism in the Bronze Age on Exmoor, but how extensive was this? What was the balance with arable cultivation?). Other issues might include: the function and date of stone settings and how they relate (if at all) to settlement evidence; the apparent absence of Neolithic monuments on Exmoor; whether the absence of field systems at some settlement sites indicates pastoralism or seasonal use of these sites.

SWARF research aim 3 (p276), 25 (285), 28 (p 286), 54 (p292), 57 (p293)

#### 5. Re-assessment of existing museum collections

There is an urgent need for existing collections of artefacts to be re-analysed. These include ceramic and flint assemblages. There should also be a concerted attempt to identify collections that are still in private hands. The results of this work should be published as soon as possible

SWARF research aim 5 (p278) and 11 (p280)

#### 6. Landscape based research

There are various elements of this approach. The first recognises the need to use the Historic Landscape Characterisation tool to develop a series of specific research questions. The second recognises that Exmoor comprises a number of distinct historic landscapes – there is a need to refine the

approach to Exmoor so that it explicitly recognises the fine grained nature of these historic landscapes. Part of this priority is the acquisition of LiDAR data for Exmoor.

SWARF Research aim 1a (p274)

## 7. The Roman landscape

To further our understanding of the Roman landscape of Exmoor by carrying out research into the nature of military occupation on and around Exmoor, by investigating native settlement and by extending the research begun by the Exmoor Iron project into the iron industry during this period. A fundamental part of achieving this objective is the publication of the existing research carried out by the Exmoor Iron Project.

SWARF research aim 50 (p291)

## 8. Settlements

Understanding the origin, development and morphology of settlements are central themes to the understanding of Exmoor's historic environment. This work should include i. research into settlement morphology and characterisation, ii.the origin and evolution of Iron Age enclosures and their landscape context, iii. research into the significance of Dunster as a medieval town through building recording, historical research and selective excavation, iv. research into post-medieval desertions, which are a common feature of Exmoor's landscape, to analyse these sites: their origins, their longevity, form and ultimately the reasons for failure (amalgamation, changing patterns of farming etc).

SWARF research aims 4f (p278) and 7 (p279)

## 7. Resource exploitation

Exmoor's abundant natural resources include minerals, marine resources, woodlands and moorlands. Priorities for research include mining centres such as Combe Martin and Bampfylde. There is also a need for industry specific research, for example into the lime industry, harbours and havens, the woodland industry, the iron industry.

SWARF research aim 38 (p288) and 47 (p291)

## 8. Farming

Most of Exmoor is farmed land (or has formerly been so). The biggest changes to the landscape are caused by farming practice. Priorities for research are Exmoor's medieval (?) field systems, ancient breeds, field gutter systems, reclamation, customs and traditions associated with the farming industry.

SWARF research aims 42 and 43 (p290)

## 9. Communication & Transport

The infrastructure of the historic landscape is fundamental to its working especially in a remote area such as Exmoor. Priorities for research include: Packhorse tracks (particularly in and around the Royal Forest), bridges and other routeways.

## 10. Ritual and Religion

Ritual and religion may be conveniently divided into pre-Christian and Christian. The priorities for research are: stone settings and standing stones generally, burial mounds: barrows and cairns, Early Christianity, churches and churchyards, holy wells.

SWARF research aim 55 (p292)

## 11. Estates and Designed Landscapes

Exmoor's estates and their designed landscapes have profoundly influenced the character of the National Park. Research is required to characterise the various estates – their architecture, design and designed landscapes – through historical research and fieldwork. It would lead to more detailed investigation at some sites, and should seek to influence their future management. Out of such work should come an analysis of the kind of styles that are being used on Exmoor and how they reflect (or not) national trends.

On Exmoor, at least 25 estates and designed landscapes have been identified, and all require some level of investigation. However, priorities for research are: Ashley Combe, Dunster, Simonsbath House, Chargot House, Combe Sydenham, Nettlecombe, Glenthorne.

12. The Built Environment

Vernacular styles, other styles, traditional building methods. Priorities for research are: thatch (specifically to identify thatched buildings on Exmoor, and locate examples of smoke blackened thatch), traditional building techniques, medieval buildings on Exmoor, buildings associated with the Arts & Crafts movement.

13. Social History

A priority for future research is the development of tourism on and around Exmoor. This should be seen also in the context of leisure and sporting activities such as horse riding, hunting and fishing.

14. Defence and Offence (military and naval)

Investigation into the military use of Exmoor. A priority for research is WWII where Exmoor has significant and extensive remains, especially those relating to training grounds.

15. The Context of Exmoor's historic environment

Where Exmoor's archaeological monuments have been dated scientifically, the dates do not accord precisely with comparable monuments from the south-west region. Analysis is required to examine this apparent divergence and to understand what it actually means.

## KEY METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Research priorities need to be delivered through appropriate methodologies. The lack of previous work on Exmoor means that in some areas the development of effective techniques is still a priority. Research ideas should ideally incorporate some of the following methods and techniques:

- 1. Integrated, multi-disciplinary approach**  
Should bring together building recording, landscape survey, fieldwalking, historical research, artefact analysis and palaeo-environmental studies.
- 2. Scientific dating**  
Much of Exmoor's archaeology is dated by analogy with similar sites elsewhere or by object typology. There is still a need for scientific dating on key sites.
- 3. Remote sensing**  
Standard geophysical methods are proving highly useful on Exmoor, but more work needs to be done. In particular the use of Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) needs to be developed.
- 4. Palaeo-environmental sampling**  
Exmoor is rich in wetland deposits, such as blanket bogs, valley mire sites and coastal wetlands. Recent sampling has concentrated on areas close to known archaeological remains, but sampling is particularly required where the relationship between cultural remains and environmental sequences is or can be clearly established. Bioarchaeological and geoarchaeological sampling appropriate to the research questions asked should be an integral part of evaluations and excavations.
- 5. Selective excavation at key sites**  
Many of Exmoor's monument categories (such as hut circles, barrows and hill-slope enclosures) have not been examined by excavation. Selective excavation is needed at representative sites to examine questions about form and function and to establish dates.
- 6. Dendrochronology on buildings**  
Dendrochronology has only been used at a few locations on Exmoor, but has already revealed several medieval roof structures. More dendrochronological sampling is required as part of other project work on Exmoor's historic buildings and will help to build a reference chronology for north Devon and west Somerset, areas which in the past have proved difficult to date using tree rings..

- 7. An Historic Environment Record to assimilate information**  
The newly available Exmoor National Park Historic Environment Record is a key research tool for those working on Exmoor's historic environment. It needs to be up-to-date and to incorporate a suite of evidence sets.
- 8. Detailed building recording**  
Detailed surveys of historic buildings are being carried out on Exmoor, but much more work on this area needs to be done.
- 9. Fieldwalking**  
A systematic fieldwalking programme is required on Exmoor to reveal new sites and boost artefact assemblages. There is particular scope here (and on excavations) for the involvement of young people and the local community, as well as archaeological societies.
- 10. Air photography and LiDAR**  
There is now a very extensive air photographic collection for Exmoor held in the National Monuments Record. The work should continue and needs to target other research projects (like the results of the National Mapping Programme project). Work should also continue on photographing levelled sites. A key research tool for Exmoor is the acquisition of LiDAR coverage for the entire National Park at a grade suitable for identifying archaeological features.
- 11. Geochemical survey**  
Geochemical survey to identify areas of metal working has been carried out and has revealed very positive results at a number of locations, including on hill-slope enclosures and to identify areas of activity on iron working sites. Further work is required to test and develop this method and to refine interpretation in conjunction with geophysical survey, so that it can become a standard part of the archaeological repertoire.

## PROGRESSING THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

No.	PRIORITY	ACTION	NOTES
1	Chronology		
2	Sea level change, coastal erosion and climate change		
3	Relict prehistoric landscapes		
4	Re-assessment of existing museum collections		
5	Landscape based research		
6	The Roman landscape		
7	Settlements		
8	Resource exploitation		
9	Communication and transport		
10	Ritual and religion		
11	Estates and designed landscapes		
12	The built environment		
13	Social history		
14	Defence and offence (military and naval)		
15	The context of Exmoor's historic environment		

**This table will form a template to measure actions and progress in achieving the objectives of the Historic Environment Research Framework for Exmoor 2010-15**

## SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

1. Continue and further develop the existing network of research projects
  - a. This should be achieved in part through 6. below.
2. Encourage others to undertake projects on Exmoor.
  - a. Develop and extend links with academic institutions, agencies, other local authorities, groups and societies, individuals and the local community.
3. There should be better funding for research projects
  - a. Develop and extend funding streams for research into Exmoor's historic environment,
  - b. Work with partners such as English Heritage (Historic Environment Enabling Programme), the AHRC, Medieval Settlement Research Group, as well as other local funding streams such as the Maltwood Fund, the Malcolm MacEwan Trust, The Exmoor Society and the Exmoor Sustainable Development Fund.
4. Raise awareness of historic environment research
  - a. Promote academic and popular publications on Exmoor's past, including field guides and leaflets in accordance with the Exmoor Historic Environment Interpretation Framework.
  - b. Encourage the setting up of local history projects by local groups, archaeological societies and schools, and support existing projects
  - c. Continue the annual Exmoor Archaeology Forum
  - d. Use the Historic Environment Review to publish a summary of 'Research News'
  - e. Exmoor NPA should host one major conference on Exmoor's Past within the life of the Framework and publish the proceedings of the Conference.

SWARF research aim 4



5. Establish an Exmoor Historic Environment Research Group.
  - a. this idea will be developed with those who have already contributed to the workshop session (March 2009),
  - b. one aim will be to convene regular seminars.
  - c. the purpose of the Group is to share knowledge, co-ordinate research and to propel the Research Framework.
  - d. consideration should be given to a group with flexible membership relating to specific themes or project areas. This will ensure that the Framework guides research on the ground.
  
6. Develop a landscape scale approach to research
  - a. by using HLC to frame research questions
  - b. by encouraging inter-disciplinary approaches.



**Hoccombe Combe - the stone boundary wall around the former Royal Forest**