



The Past on your Doorstep

Today's landscape has been shaped by human activity over many thousands of years. The historic environment is a finite and non-renewable resource, often fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. It is a precious legacy to pass on to future generations.

A few facts

The past is all around us

There is no part of our modern landscape that has not been altered by past generations. We are surrounded by layer upon layer of evidence of human activity, ranging from the earliest prehistoric periods to World War II defences and modern industrial and agricultural sites.

Our county

Dorset is rich in archaeology and historic buildings. The county is famous for charming villages with characteristic local building materials such as thatch. Monuments such as Maiden Castle and the Cerne Abbas Giant are world famous 'motifs' of the county's rich heritage.

The many prehistoric round barrows and hill forts in Dorset are the subject of intensive academic interest and research. The prehistoric landscape of areas such as the South Dorset Ridgeway and Cranborne Chase, with the famous Dorset Cursus are particularly significant. However, even the most humble village has a past – there is much waiting to be discovered in parishes across the county.

Quality of life

The history on our doorstep contributes significantly to our quality of life. Not only our sense of place, but meaning depth, diversity, familiarity, memories and opportunities.

Economy

The historic environment can make a significant contribution to the local economy, particularly in rural areas. As well as attracting visitors, it stimulates the use of traditional building techniques and rural crafts, and brings in funding relating to the conservation and interpretation of historic features.

Understanding and enjoyment

The historic landscape is the most accessible of historical 'texts' – easy to read and a readily-accessible way of understanding our history, origins and identity. The past on our doorstep can be a valuable educational asset for school, community and individuals.

The best of the new

We don't aim to 'fossilise' the historic environment in its entirety – change is both necessary and desirable. After all, the surroundings we enjoy today are the product of many centuries of change. However, recognising and keeping the best from the past is the key to maintaining our pleasant surroundings and creates a setting for the best of the new.

Protection

Many monuments and historic buildings are designated as Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings, in recognition of their importance. Some areas are on a national Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Different degrees of statutory protection apply to these and other designations, and there may be permissions to apply for in some circumstances. The figures are always changing, but there are approximately 1500 Scheduled Monuments, 13,000 listed buildings, 190 Conservation Areas, and 30 registered parks in Dorset.

What you can do

• Build up a better picture of your local historic environment

The key to conserving and enjoying your local historic environment is understanding what is there. The information contained in the Dorset Historic Environment Record (HER) sets out what is known about your locality. You may want to stick with this level of information but doing additional research on any number of themes will help you create a bigger and brighter picture of the past on your doorstep. Any further information you can gather will be welcomed by the Historic Environment Record.

Some ideas for additional information gathering:

- Hedgerows, dry stone walls and other field boundaries, on the ground or by tithe maps.
- Archaeology and historic buildings.
- Woodland areas and their features such as wood banks, saw pits, charcoal burning sites, coppice stools, veteran trees and park pales.
- Agricultural features such as sheep washes, milk churn stands, orchards, retting tanks, cart sheds and barns.

- Information about parks and gardens is patchy.
- Archaeology of water courses – watermeadows, sluices, bridges & mills.
- Place names, field names, local legends.
- Local building materials, quarries, local industries.

Who can help: DCC Historic Environment team – may have current projects where you could be involved; Portable Antiquities Scheme; Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society; Dorset History Centre – holds archives for Dorset.

Funding: Dorset Archaeological Committee, Heritage Lottery Fund.

Things to be aware of: It is important to get the landowner's permission; some areas and buildings may have statutory protection – check with the HER.



• Make the most of your local historic environment

If you've got them, flaunt them! With landowner consent, look around for areas or structures where access could be made more easy. Perhaps a modest amount of scrub clearance or the improvement of footpaths would help. Look at ways of improving understanding of these features, perhaps by walks, talks, school projects, leaflets or information boards.

Who can help: as left
Funding: There are limited funds available for this kind of work, so be prepared to do some fundraising; Heritage Lottery Fund; AONB Sustainable Development Funds



• Capture valuable memories with an oral history project

Record the precious memories of older members of the community, or create a record of how your community, from the youngest to the oldest, views and values the historic landscape. You may like to focus on themes such as farming or rural life, local folk tales and legends, or World War II memories.

• Get your hands dirty

Take part in practical conservation work on an ancient monument or historic structure. Dorset County Council has a monument management scheme, and there may be opportunities to nominate particular monuments for consideration for inclusion in the programme, or to take part in conservation work as a volunteer. Other organisations such as the National Trust and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

Your historic features

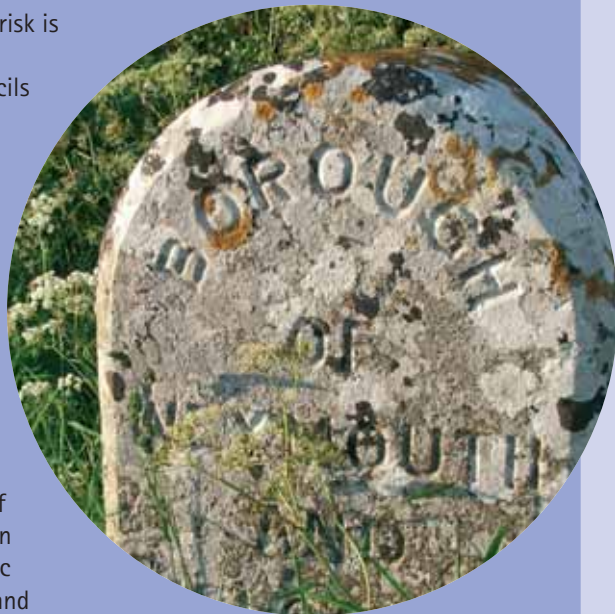
Things to be aware of: It is important to get the landowner's permission, some areas and buildings may have statutory protection – check with the HER.



Local intelligence

Recognition and reporting of monuments and buildings at risk is the first step towards getting something done. Parish Councils are invited to comment on planning or listed building applications. Get advice if you feel you should comment, but aren't certain. Report instances of damage or monuments and buildings in poor condition.

Who can help: the DCC Historic Environment team (advises local councils on the archaeological implications of planning applications, and can give general advice on historic buildings); planning officers and conservation officers at your local district or borough council.



Memories of the past project

Who can help: DCC Historic Environment team can provide advice, training and useful contacts, and may be able to lend equipment. Dorset History Centre curates tape/film and digital archives.

Funding: AONB Sustainable Development Funds

South Dorset Ridgeway

There are opportunities for getting involved in a community project centred on the important history of the South Dorset Ridgeway. This is the chalk ridge running from Broadmayne to Kingston Russell, which is very significant for its density of ancient monuments (mainly Neolithic and Bronze Age barrows). Over 500 monuments have been identified so far!

Who can help: Dorset AONB



ty together

undertake work on archaeological sites from time to time.

Who can help: DCC Historic Environment team, DCC Conservation Ranger Team, National Trust, BTCV

Things to be aware of: Risk assessment and personal accident & public liability insurance required. Check for historic environment and natural environment designations at planning stage. Avoid disturbance to wildlife.

Parish Archive Project

Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB has set up an inspiring Parish Archive Project. They will be working with local communities to explore the story of their past, and how these relate to life in the parish now and in the future. A touring exhibition will showcase the

fascinating reflections of parish life uncovered during the project.

Who can help: Cranborne Chase AONB

Who can help

BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)

01929 472226
www.btcv.org.uk

Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB

01725 517417
info@cranbornechase.org.uk

Dorset AONB

Countryside Officer – Tom Munro on 01305 756785
T.munro@dorsetcc.gov.uk
www.dorsetaonb.org.uk

Dorset County Council

Historic Environment team:

- Historic Environment Record, Historic Environment Liaison Officers, Historic Environment Countryside Advice Service: Claire Pinder, Senior Archaeologist – 01305 224921
- Historic buildings: 01305 224283
- Planning advice on archaeology to local councils, Monument Management Scheme: 01305 224222
- Conservation Ranger Team: 01305 251228

Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society

01305 262735
dorsetcountymuseum@dor-mus.demon.co.uk
www.dor-mus.demon.co.uk

Dorset History Centre

01305 250550
www.dorsetforyou.com

National Trust

Corfe Castle Visitor Centre
corfecastle@nationaltrust.org.uk
01929 481294

Local (district, borough and unitary) council

Conservation officers offer specific advice on listed/historic buildings, building techniques and materials, and conservation areas:

Bournemouth 01202 451451
Christchurch Borough Council 01202 495047
East Dorset District Council 01202 886201
North Dorset District Council 01258 454111
Poole 01202 633345
Purbeck District Council 01929 556561
West Dorset District Council 01305 251010
Weymouth & Portland Borough Council 01305 838000

Portable Antiquities Scheme

c/o Dorset County Council Historic Environment Team
Finds Liaison Officers – Ciorstaidh Hayward Trevarthen or Naomi Payne
01305 224921

Funding

AONB Sustainable Development Funds

Dorset AONB:
01305 756782 or k.wright@dorsetcc.gov.uk
www.dorsetaonb.org.uk
Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB:
01725 517417 or info@cranbornechase.org.uk
www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk

Community Action Fund for Dorset

Rachelle Smith, Dorset Community Action 01305 216411
rachelle.smith@dorsetcommunityaction.org.uk

Dorset Archaeological Committee

Makes small grants available for projects relating to the archaeology and historic buildings of Dorset.
c/o the Honorary Secretary, 20 Frome Terrace, Dorchester DT1 1JQ

Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund gives grants for projects which encourage people to be involved in their heritage, conserve and enhance heritage or improve understanding, access & enjoyment to their local heritage. They encourage would-be applicants to contact a Development Officer at the earliest possible stage for advice.
01392 223950
carolp@hlf.org.uk
www.hlf.org.uk/English/In Your Area/SouthWest

Things to be aware of

Beware! Scheduled Monuments may not be obvious and easy to recognise – many are not visible as above-ground monuments. Listed buildings are not always buildings – even relatively modest structures may be listed.

Even if you aren't planning a specific historic environment project, you may need to take it into account. A project that involves tree planting, for example, may need permission or revision if it affects a sensitive area. Better safe than sorry – check with the Dorset Historic Environment Record as part of your planning for a project.

Further information

Council for British Archaeology

Education charity aiming to involve people in archaeology and promote appreciation & care of historic environment
www.britarch.ac.uk

West Dorset Research Centre

Developed a new approach to researching the history of a village, parish packs produced for Netherbury & Allington, guidelines available.
01308 458061, wdrc@dorsetmigration.co.uk
www.dorsetmigration.org.uk



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Ideas for Action

Build up a picture of the past

We are surrounded by layer upon layer of human activity – every place has a past. There is much waiting to be discovered. The more you look, the more you will find – information on topics such as field boundaries, woodland features, parks & gardens, water courses and place names are still patchy but often best gathered locally. Your 'picture of the past' will be a useful layer for the Parish Plan and a good starting point for practical projects.

Capture memories of the past

Memories of older members of the community can help bring your local history alive. Capturing memories and untold stories can give us snapshots of the way people lived their lives and show us how places have changed. An enriching experience for all involved and a great way to celebrate your local heritage.

Get your hands dirty

Many ancient monuments or historic structures suffer not from demolition but from neglect. Practical work such as scrub clearance can help conserve them so that it can be passed on for future generations to enjoy.

Local eyes and ears

Reporting of monuments and buildings at risk is the first step towards getting something done. Become a Historic Environment Liaison Officer (HELO) to help connect the County Council with communities, no special knowledge is needed and training is provided.

South Dorset Ridgeway & Dorset Winterbournes

Two projects have been set up by Dorset AONB to explore these fascinating historic environments by encouraging local communities to research their historic landscape through surveys, memory capture and other activities. Getting involved will equip you with skills, information to interpret and celebrate your local heritage.

If you want to take up any of these ideas, there's a lot of help available. See over for how to get started.

Case study

North Winterbornes Project

From Medieval strip lynchets and deserted villages to beautiful old churches, the Winterborne Valley in North Dorset is full of fascinating heritage and archaeology.

Dorset AONB set up the North Winterbornes project to look at the rich wildlife & heritage of Dorset's rare winterbourne streams.

While still in its infancy, the project has succeeded in bringing together interested local people to help investigate the heritage assets of the valley and find out more about their significance and conservation needs. Local people from the length of the valley to share experiences and knowledge.

Claire Pinder, Senior Archaeologist at Dorset County Council ran the first workshops to get local people started. "I am delighted to have this opportunity to tap into local knowledge and enthusiasm for the historic environment, and have enjoyed meeting with residents along the Winterborne Valley"

At the workshop in Winterborne Stickland, participants learnt how to undertake local research using documents & aerial photos and basic field survey techniques.

Since then, participants have been enthused about discovering more about their local history. Lots of ideas have come up and local people are planning diverse activities along the valley, from one off community 'field walking' events, local oral history projects, to detailed research into specific winterborne heritage features. All the information generated will be inputted into the Historic Environment Record.

If you are interested in taking up any of these ideas in your local area, we have more detailed information to help you.

For each topic in this pack, you can request our additional sheets which include more actions, a guide to who can help with advice and support, sources of funding available and things to be aware of before you start. These are all free and updated regularly.

For your free copy, contact the Dorset AONB Office:

01305 756782
dorsetaonb@dorsetcc.gov.uk
www.dorsetaonb.org.uk

