



**Cranborne Chase
Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty**

The Hart Magazine

Summer 2022

Highlights Inside

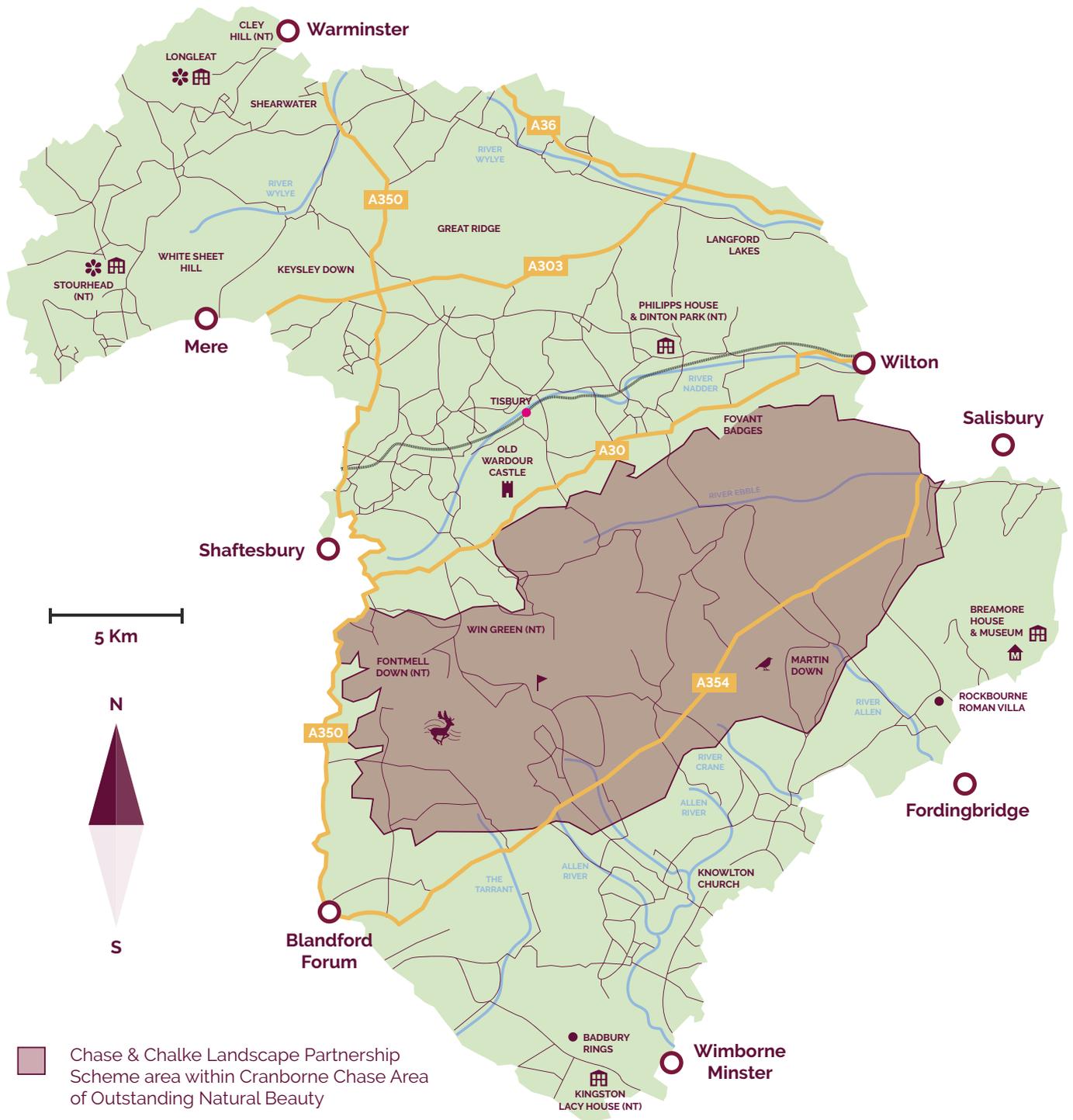
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Discover Cranborne Chase

Explore your local area this Summer, join us at one of our events or sign up and become a volunteer



#cranbornechaseaonb



Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Our area covers 380 sq miles of countryside overlapping the boundaries of Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset. It is a diverse landscape offering areas of rolling chalk grassland, ancient woodlands, chalk escarpments, downland hillsides and chalk river valleys each with a distinct and recognisable character.

What's Inside

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Editorial

Cranborne Chase AONB

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Cover image of a summer walk near Swan Pond at Wardour Castle thanks to Ines Morrell. See page 10 for more information.



Welcome to your Hart Magazine

Mike Short, Acting Chairman,
Cranborne Chase AONB

The Hart is for everyone who lives and works in Cranborne Chase AONB and to all those visiting who want to find out more about this beautiful area and what's happening this Summer.

No doubt 2022 is going to be busy. With everything opening back up and thanks to our volunteers – yes we welcome more – for the Chase & Chalke Landscape Partnership Scheme, we're organising and hosting more of the 20 projects designed to help everyone reconnect with the area. Read on and find out how you can get involved.

The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme has started apace and farmers and landowners within the AONB have risen to the challenge of creating projects that will benefit all of us and we share some of these stories.

The AONB's Nature Recovery Plan is also being developed and is a commitment made by all 34 AONBs across England.

We want as many people as possible to get involved in helping us deliver our ambition over the coming years so we can all have a hand in looking after one of England's finest landscapes.

Enjoy your summer in Cranborne Chase AONB

RESPECT. PROTECT. ENJOY.

Your AONB is proportionately funded by Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset Councils with 75% of our core funding coming from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).





As seen on social

Follow us at [@cranborne.chaseaonb](#) and [@chaseandchalke](#) to see more.

[#cranbornechaseaonb](#) [#chaseandchalke](#)



Chase & Chalke volunteers speak to BBC Radio Wiltshire as they clear Ackling Dyke, a Roman Road running from Badbury Rings to Old Sarum.



Researching our new 40th Anniversary walks is never a chore around glorious Fonthill.



Our Woodland Wild Things enjoying the Fontmell Down Forest School in partnership with the National Trust.



Constellations and marshmallows a perfect combination when learning about dark skies at Shaftesbury Primary School [#starrystarrynights](#).



Look out for our 2022 Chase & Chalke Wild Weeks from 25th July to 5th August



Aurora Boveridge College students and the Seeds 4 Success Leisure Credits crew working on Rights of Way maintenance.





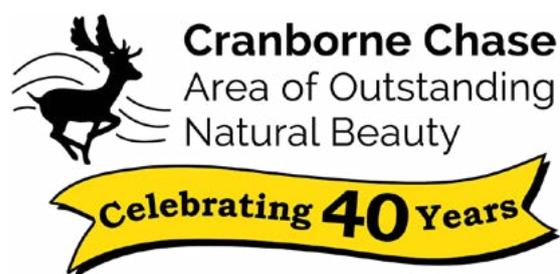
These trees were planted by Martin Green at Down Farm as part of their project to create new nesting habitats for turtle doves and the protection of butterfly orchids.

Farming in Protected Landscapes

The team has had a busy year with some great projects completed and underway (see pages 10-11). The Defra-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes programme offers farmers and landowners within Cranborne Chase AONB the chance to create and bring to life some innovative projects. The programme runs until 2024 and the team welcomes applications – or a chat about ideas over a cup of tea - any time.

The Winner Is...

Congratulations to Cranborne Chase AONB based farmer Peter Shallcross who has been working tirelessly to re-introduce the iconic elm tree back to the Wiltshire countryside. Peter was awarded the Conservation Project of the Year at the 2022 Wiltshire Life Awards. Peter has single-handedly propagated and grown hundreds of disease resistant elm trees on his farm in addition to importing them from Europe. He has been selling them at cost to farmers and landowners across Wiltshire. Last year he planted over 200 trees on his farm and gave more than 100 to his neighbours in the Nadder Valley Farmer Group.



From Warminster to Wimborne - 40 routes for 40 years

In our 40th anniversary year, we have been creating and designing a new set of walking routes with help from a great team of volunteers. The new routes enable people to enjoy the whole AONB. More cycle, horse riding and tramper routes to come. New walks can be downloaded from our website.

Nature Recovery

In 2019, all AONBs in England pledged to create a Nature Recovery Plan. Find out more about the plan for Cranborne Chase AONB and how it's progressing (see page 15).

Volunteering Special

It's hard work but we have a good chat!

John Webb, one of Chase & Chalke's practical conservation volunteers, was looking for something to do after the stresses of lockdown. He shares his story.

"Some of it was driven by lockdown, I was looking for something to do and I saw these opportunities advertised through Chase & Chalke and an organisation dealing with mental stress called Steps 2 Wellbeing."

John has been helping Roland Hughes, Ranger for Chase & Chalke, to clear areas of scrub on Martin Down National Nature Reserve (NNR) as part of the Greater Grazing project that is run in partnership with Hampshire County Council and Natural England.

John, continued: "It's right up my street. Each week I get the chance to meet up with some like-minded people. We can help with these projects and feel like we're giving something back. It's hard work but we have a good chat!"



The Ancient Ways project has also given the volunteering teams the chance to clear part of the Roman Road that runs from Badbury Rings to Old Sarum. Since it has been cleared, you can see the route it takes through the landscape in this area. The clearance of scrub helps protect the archaeology but also gives the abundance of biodiversity in this area the chance to thrive.

"Lockdown has hit different people in different ways. These volunteering opportunities really fit the bill. They give me some form of escape, time to think, and I've enjoyed every second of it."

Why not join the team and help us tell the story of this amazing landscape? All opportunities are listed on the Chase & Chalke Volunteer Hub at www.cranbornechase.org.uk/chaseandchalke.



My Volunteering Life in Cranborne Chase: Debbie Browning



Favourite day:
The hedge-laying course at the Ancient Technology Centre. Among the re-created ancient buildings we learnt how to 'lay' a Dorset-style hedge, creating a better habitat for wildlife.



Best bit of wildlife spotting:
A common lizard at Martin Down, yellowhammers, linnets, and skylarks at a farm recently. The wild snapping turtle seen from a canoe on a summer holiday if that counts!



Favourite place to volunteer: Martin Down NNR as it is steeped in history and coated with a rich blanket of chalk grassland plants and fungi - and I love Roland the Ranger's lunchtime jacket potatoes.



Did you know?
Pasque flowers are incredibly rare and one has been spotted at Martin Down. Legend has it they only appear where the ground has been soaked by the blood of Romans or Danes.



Favourite season:
Early autumn as the last flowering plants give a final dose of energy before everything closes-up and hunkers down for winter - the weather is usually clear, crisp and sunny.

Photo of linnet flock by Jim Russell. Photo of pasque flower by Linda Smith.



Cranborne Chase
Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty



CHASE &
CHALKE
LANDSCAPE
PARTNERSHIP



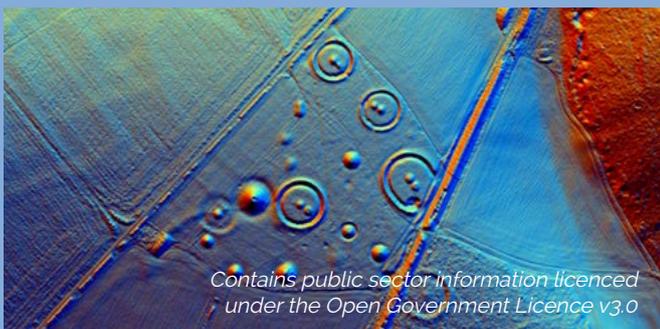
Made possible with

Heritage
Fund

Cranborne Chase LiDAR portal

Come and help us discover the unmapped archaeology across the Chase & Chalke Landscape Partnership area and become a 'Champion of the Past'. We are excited to be launching the Cranborne Chase LiDAR Portal later this summer. This high resolution LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) imagery from over 350 square kilometres of our area will allow us to uncover previously unknown archaeological features.

By helping map, record and interpret these potential features online, our team of local archaeological volunteers can then go out into the field and survey new features to build a more complete picture of the landscape. This survey has allowed us to gather high resolution imagery of 350 square kilometres of our area and **we need your help to map the many archaeological sites** and features it has revealed.



Contains public sector information licenced under the Open Government Licence v3.0

Can you dig it? No. Well, not yet.....

Come with us on a journey of discovery to learn more about the archaeology of the Chase & Chalke area by joining this ground-breaking (see what we did there?) programme of **archaeological discovery and investigation**. Once we've identified new archaeological features through the online Cranborne Chase LiDAR Portal we'll need your help to carry on the investigation.

You can **join the team of local archaeological volunteers** and go out into the field to investigate new archaeological features and sites on the ground. We'll be locating, recording and photographing these new features as well as carrying out geophysical surveys and small excavations which will be vital in our understanding of the archaeology of the area.



Creating a new wave of biological recorders

As part of the Crystal Clear Ebble and Nurturing Nature projects we have fantastic opportunities for volunteers to join the Chase & Chalke Landscape Partnership volunteering team. You can **develop new skills in species identification**, survey and recording techniques, **get stuck in with some practical conservation days** and help us improve biodiversity with hands-on habitat management.

With free training and the support from expert tutors you can help us to better understand and monitor the biodiversity of the Chase & Chalke area. Over the next two years we will **undertake extensive surveys of species and habitats** across more than 100 sites, collecting thousands of species records with lots of tea and biscuits along the way.



Photo courtesy of Michael Gill/AVAS

Chase & Chalke is an ambitious five-year Landscape Partnership Scheme (2020 – 2024), led by Cranborne Chase AONB and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which will deliver a programme of twenty projects designed to create opportunities to better connect people and communities to this wonderful landscape. Thank you to National Lottery players for making our work possible.

www.cranbornechase.org.uk/chaseandchalke



What's happening

1. National Pollinator Week 20 – 26 June 2022

We're buzzing! This year we're celebrating National Pollinator Week with our partners at Hampshire County Council Countryside Service and the National Trust, as well as the amazing farmers of the Martin Down Farmer Supercluster. Join us for Pollinator Walks where you will walk through the fields and learn about the importance of our pollinators, hear about recent conservation work and help us assess the quality of areas for insects and birds.

2. Butterfly Counting 1 April to 30 September 2022 & 2023

Butterfly transects are conducted on the same route, once a week from 1 April, finishing at the end of September each year. This year and in 2023, we're looking for more volunteers to join us in carrying out butterfly transects across five routes on Martin Down. This 350 hectare National Nature Reserve of unspoiled chalk downland is home to many rare and beautiful butterfly species.

3. Chalke Valley History Festival 20th - 26th June 2022

Our marquees will be packed to the rafters with a whole host of hands-on activities and information. Visit the Chase & Chalke team and explore our prehistoric and Roman Britain Living History events, get involved with new projects and pick up some of our new 40th Anniversary walks. Grab an ice-cream and head on over; here's to a sunny week.



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**4. Festival of Archaeology
23 – 24 July**

Join us at Salisbury Museum for this relaxed, fun and fascinating weekend of archaeology. Bring the whole family and enjoy the museum, its gardens and the historic setting. We'll have our Archaeology Sand Boxes ready for you to find some amazing artefacts and talk to our experts about how you can get involved with our archaeology projects.

**5. Chase & Chalke Wild Weeks
25 July – 5 August**

Chase & Chalke is launching its second Wild Week at different venues across Cranborne Chase and this year it will be LARGE with two-weeks' worth of activities and events. With the help of our fantastic team of committed volunteers and expert partners. We'll have lots of hands-on events including nature walks, river dipping, forest school activity sessions, wildlife survey training, scavenger hunts and pollinator walks.



Future Events

All of our events can be found on our website or our social media pages. If you would like your event publicised, email us at: info@cranbornechase.org.uk

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Pop-up shops, trailers for farm open days and pond clearance

Farming in Protected Landscapes in Cranborne Chase AONB – the first year’s report.

The new Farming in Protected Landscapes programme offers funding to farmers and land managers for projects that are outside normal agri-environment schemes. The projects must offer tangible benefits for wildlife, nature, people and landscapes.

The programme runs until March 2024 and applications are open until January 2024. The first year has already proved fruitful and there some great projects underway. Funding from £1,000 - £150,000 is available per project.

If you're looking for some inspiration head to the Farming in Protected Landscapes pages of our website where we have a summary of projects.

Helena Darragh is the Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer for Cranborne Chase AONB – if you would like to discuss your project idea, please email helenadarragh@cranbornechase.org.uk



Tree planting, wildlife surveys and the creation of lapwing plots are just a few of the projects underway. Find out how the tail of the Swan Pond at Wardour Castle, shown here, is being improved thanks to funding from the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme.

My Farming Life in Cranborne Chase: Liz Birkett



Favourite season: Spring when the days are getting longer and everything is starting to green up and downland is coming to life with cowslips and insects. We also get out a bit more on longer walks exploring the area.



What I love about Cranborne Chase: The multitude of "secret" valleys you can see often only when you are walking along the Ox Drovers. It's like a hidden world down there and they're often the best places to stand and spot wildlife.



Best wildlife spotting: Finding marsh fritillary and Adonis blue butterflies on our farm. I watched a barn owl one evening that was being nudged by a cow as it was sitting watching them. It eventually flew off – fabulous to watch!



Favourite walk(s): White Sheet Hill walking east with magnificent views over the chalk valleys. Broad Chalke along Church Bottom up to the Ox Drove, making a loop down the valleys into Bishopstone.



Favourite wildflowers: Some of the orchids - the early purple and pyramidal orchid with their vibrant purple colour standing out against green herbage.

Liz Birkett is a member of the local assessment panel for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme at Cranborne Chase AONB. Liz farms in the Chalke Valley and is an active member of the Chalke Valley Farmer Cluster.

Restoring the tail of the swan at Wardour

Farming in Protected Landscapes is helping to fund a programme of works at the Wardour Estate to restore elements of its original design, showing off some of its former glory, as The Hart discovered on a recent visit.

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Wardour Park is one of the most popular attractions in Cranborne Chase AONB thanks to Old Wardour Castle which is managed by English Heritage. Lord Arundell of Wardour commissioned Richard Woods to design the Park in the 1760s and 1770s; the Park consists of a series of classic features which includes a Palladium mansion, New Wardour Castle, Old Wardour Castle, a chain of lakes, parkland trees and a Great Terrace.

Those involved in the ownership of the estate would like to see aspects of restoration of some of its 18th century designs.

Richard Arundell, who is the principal landowner, said: "This is phase two of the plan to help us restore Wardour. Phase one was possible thanks to funding from Natural England which helped pay for a comprehensive survey and includes a proposal for the management of the landscape."

Phase two of the plan came about through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. The work at Wardour includes tree and scrub clearance on the dam and banks of Park Pond, the final pond in the chain of lakes that starts at the A30. It was designed originally to be a visible, eye-catching water feature that you would see from other areas of the Estate. The second element is the restoration of the tail of Swan Pond, the pond designed in the shape of a Swan which is at Old Wardour Castle.

Richard continued: "When this new programme was identified to us at the end of 2021, we applied and are very happy to have been granted funding that falls within our plans."

This eastern end of the park attracts a huge number of visitors and the pond at Old Wardour Castle will be familiar to many. As a first step towards enhanced public amenity a stretch of the fence surrounding the pond has been removed so that people can sit on the benches provided and enjoy a scenic view of the lake. Over Covid, this has been incredibly popular with the public and this funding is paying for the next stage of the plans for Swan Pond which includes enhancing the shape and visibility of the lake and access to those who wish to enjoy it.

It is hoped that future funding may pay for a footpath for buggies and wheelchairs which will go along to the corner of the pond, and new benches so people can enjoy the view and see the gothic pavilion.

Farming in Protected Landscapes has also funded the creation of swales and shallow drainage channels on other Wardour land to alleviate flooding.

Read more about this project on our blog www.cranbornechase.org.uk/chalkeboard

Juniper berries, bees & butterflies!

Covering almost 12,000 hectares, the Wylde Valley Farmers is a group of 29 farms working collectively to deliver greater benefits for soil, water and wildlife at a landscape scale. The popularity of the group has grown from 17 farms in 2020. Helen Pengelly, facilitator of the group, updates us on projects and plans for 2022 and beyond.

It's been a busy few years for the Wylde Valley Farmers. Membership has grown and the area we cover is expanding into the upper reaches of the Wylde through the Deverills towards Kilmington.

We were thrilled to have been shortlisted for the Wiltshire Life Conservation Project of the Year for our work saving Wiltshire's juniper. Working with Plantlife and thanks to funding from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, we have helped create 32 juniper scrapes (large tracts of bare ground) sown with seed from berries collected from mature bushes on Wylde Valley downland sites. We have 8000 cuttings being grown on in a Devon nursery to be planted out this autumn.

We're keen to see how our work supports species and our members use the 'Coreo' app designed by Natural Apptitude to record wildlife. In February some farms took part in the Big Farmland Bird Count where over 200 corn bunting were recorded on one farm, over 130 lapwing on another and 800+ golden plover.

The planting of disease resistant elms continues and over the winter, members have planted 175 trees; almost 400 in total have been planted since 2019 as part of a

project to bring back the white-letter hairstreak butterfly to the area.

We are working on a major project to increase connectivity of pollinator habitat across the whole membership area; Our Nectar Connector project which is being supported through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

We have a comprehensive river corridor survey and assessment of the river and floodplain habitat and are working with Wessex Rivers Trust on their Wider Wylde project to identify opportunities to restore the river and floodplain to a more natural state. This will have multiple benefits for wildlife, water quality and flood resilience.

We've been keen to learn more about Regenerative Farming techniques and have started promoting it across the membership through talks and events as well as soil sampling and cover crop trials. This work is focussed on improving soil health and promoting farming techniques that rely on far less inputs.

If you are interested in joining one of our groups or would like to find out more please email Tracy Adams, Farm Conservation Adviser for Cranborne Chase AONB at tracyadams@cranbornechase.org.uk



The Wylde Valley Farmer Group is one of eight Farmer Groups in Cranborne Chase a group of 29 farms working collectively to deliver greater benefits for soil, water and wildlife at a landscape scale. Visit www.wyldevalleyfarmers.org or you can follow them on Instagram @wyldevalleyfarmers.

Photo of juniper berry harvesting courtesy of Plantlife.



Puddle Edge, Church Bottom

Earth-pigment drawings using foraged pigments collected on community walks is the basis of a new artist residency project, 'Unearthing' created by artist Sara Dudman. It forms part of the Chase & Chalke Landscape Partnership Scheme.

Chase & Chalke volunteer Jeni Bell, joined Sara on one of her recent explorations of the landscape and tells us about her journey here.

A group of jackdaws swirl above St Rumbold's just as Sara, Tom and Sasha come into view. They're dressed for the elements, and after walking from Martin to Pentridge, the bench in front of the church beckons them to rest.

Sara Dudman is artist in residence for the Chalke and Chase Landscape Partnership, and today with her accompanying volunteers she has been in search of natural pigments for her project: 'Unearthing'.

After settling on the wooden bench, Sara dives into her bag for today's findings. Amidst maps and her trusty trowel, are sandwich bags of soil, labelled with masking tape and biro: Roman Road Mole Hill, Bokerley Ditch. These are the soil samples 'unearthed' on today's walk.

'I'm making paints from all the earth and pigments we collect' she says. These paints, made both on her own and with other people, play a large part in Sara's residency. Sara will be delivering a series of workshops for schools, community groups and the local community to encourage others 'to make paintings of the flora and fauna, using the earth it all came from, which I will compile into a tapestry.'

How exactly do you decide what makes good soil though? As Sara unwraps her well-earned lunch, she explains how samples are picked.

'Someone might say – look at that wonderful colour, shall we use that? And a lot of the walking routes are designed to go over historically and geologically interesting places.'

Between bites of her roll, she tells me 'On previous days I've been into the excavated Dorset Cursus, and got chalk from the side of the ditch which was created by the Neolithic people 4000 years ago, and on our next walk we might get a trowel full of earth from where Sir Philip Sydney allegedly wrote Arcadia.'

For Sara, it's more than just using the materials to paint a physical representation of the landscape, 'it's about unearthing all of the stories that go with it.'

During her 6-month residency here on the Chase, Sara also wants to concentrate on collaboration. 'Tom and Sasha have been fantastic today, real lifelines.'

Tom is fantastically knowledgeable about routes and history, and Sasha has so much local knowledge. It's a complete collaboration.'

Between the array of varying coloured soil samples on the bench, lies a map of the area and the walk they've done today. Walking plays a huge role in the residency, and Sara will be taking lots of people with her on, what she terms, 'nomadic sporadic' walks through the landscape.

As the jackdaws chatter in the churchyard, Sara consults the map. With Tom they examine lines across the landscape; the route they will follow back over the chalk. There is still an entire afternoon's walking ahead of them, and with that, plenty more stories to be unearthed along the way.

Jeni Bell is a local nature writer, you can find more of her work at www.seekingwildsights.co.uk

Dig your own earth pigments to make, paint and share on Instagram using [#uneartingchaseandchalke](https://www.instagram.com/uneartingchaseandchalke)



Scan the QR code and use Sara's guide to making earth pigment paints and learn how you can upload yours to an Instagram gallery. Sara also names her pigments, what name will you give yours?

Dark Skies

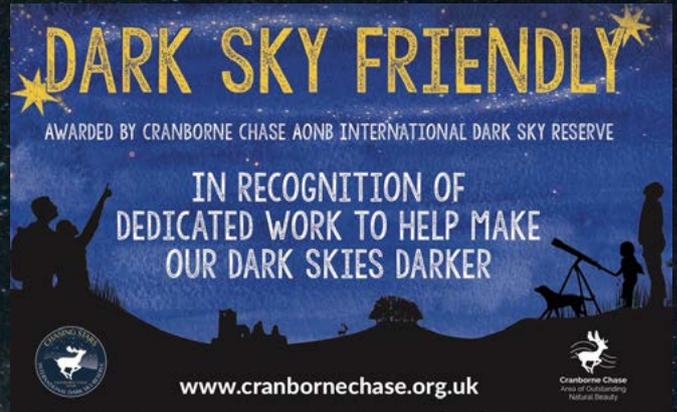
Look Up!

The International Dark Sky Reserve team has been busy this year with a whole host of stargazing events, another Dark Skies Festival and the Starry, Starry Nights project as part of Chase & Chalke.

Steve Tonkin, astronomer and Dark Sky Advisor for Cranborne Chase AONB spent much of the winter out and about checking lights for our Dark Sky Accreditation Awards and tells us about some of this year's award recipients. It could be you, too...

Catherine Lockyer of Marshwood Fam Camping, lives in the intrinsically dark location north of Dinton and wants guest to enjoy the sparkling starry skies. The farm is making changes to their lights, replacing an overly bright light on a barn with a discreet downlighter. This gives light for visitors but stops light shining elsewhere.

Binoculars, star-charts and a planisphere have been made available to guests, and Catherine intends to run stargazing evenings with local astronomers in early



autumn. We were delighted to give her our highest 5-Star Dark Sky Friendly accreditation.

Sixpenny Handley Parish Council wanted to extend the use of its recreation ground as a multi-use games area. They found some well-designed sports lighting, but the LEDs had a high colour temperature. The AONB spoke to the manufacturer, who agreed to produce the lighting with the "warm white" colour suitable for an International Dark Sky Reserve and the AONB helped with funding.

For more information on our Dark Sky Friendly Scheme or to organise a visit from Steve to help with your lighting, email stevetonkin@cranbornechase.org.uk or visit the Dark Sky section on our website www.cranbornechase.org.uk

Dark Sky Custodians in Action

The 'Starry, Starry Nights' project, part of the Chase & Chalke Landscape Partnership Scheme, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is linking local communities with the dark night skies.

With training and support Dark Sky Custodians are already helping spread the word. Two new Custodians, Jan and Katie Robinson, told us why they have joined the crew and what they've been up to:

"We began the training sessions as complete novices to astronomy, knowing only the basics of the Plough and Pole Star and a few other planets. We both enjoyed the training sessions."

"We now are happy to spread the word of the wonders of being one of the few Dark Sky Status areas in the UK."

"With help from Home Farm Camping in Tarrant Gunville and the AONB team we helped organise our own stargazing evening and we hope this is the first of many."



Dark Sky Custodian, Jan Robinson taking a dark sky meter reading.

If you are interested in becoming a Dark Sky Custodian, the Chase & Chalke team would love to hear from you. To find out more visit the website or contact Rachel Limb at rachellimb@cranbornechase.org.uk

Nature Recovery

In 2019, all AONBs in the country pledged to do more to aid nature's recovery. Here Michele Bowe explains what's been happening in your area.

The pledge to do more to help nature's recovery started with the creation of a Nature Recovery Plan in January 2022. Early work to develop this plan for Cranborne Chase was designed to highlight the importance of the AONB for nature – including habitats and species and the other benefits that looking after nature provides for us – clean water, clean air, good soils, timber, food and a space to relax and for the benefit of our health and wellbeing.

We've asked organisations working on nature's recovery what they think are the key species we should include. We've ended up with a long list!

Despite a huge amount of effort on the part of many individual farmers, organisations and landowners, nature is still in decline. This Recovery Plan will demonstrate what threats nature faces and importantly what we, the AONB team, our partners, landowners and individuals can do to turn nature's fortunes around.

We have been grateful for the huge amount of input from over 50 individuals in 28 different organisations and

a stakeholder workshop in March. This has all helped us to work out what the plan should contain, identify our most important, scarce and threatened species and places, and what we should do to help nature recover.

Turtle doves, corn bunting and **yellowhammer** are birds that were highlighted as important in arable landscapes. **Small, chalkhill** and **Adonis blue butterflies** and the **Duke of Burgundy** (another butterfly) were cited as key species to focus on in chalk grassland. Rare **Bechstein's and barbastelle bats** were considered important mammal species, while plant specialists consider assemblages of **arable plants** as a priority. Many people thought better management of our woodlands is vital and others that we need to create more joined up landscapes for wildlife to move through.

This lovely list won't necessarily generate more money or resources to help us act. However, the plan will help us focus our existing work, through the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme for instance, it enables us to work better in partnership and develop funding proposals for our collaboratively designed priorities.



We're also looking beyond our boundaries; nature doesn't stop at the AONB border.

- We're looking north, west and east to other chalk landscapes which share similar species to develop a new initiative called 'Big Chalk' – helping chalk specialist wildlife to move through large landscapes in response to climate change.
- Community groups working on landscape-scale conservation on our western flank. The Forest of Selwood and The Gillingham Royal Forest are both

groups looking at ancient woodland, wood pasture and veteran trees.

- Many of our sparkling chalk rivers and streams flow east to the Hampshire Avon and action to keep these clean helps with catchment initiatives to support all the species that depend on them from source to sea.

We'll be teasing through all this input to create a plan that contains concrete actions for us all to focus on to help wildlife in our beautiful Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Explore the area's rich history with one of our new walks

With thanks to **1st Woodcutts Cubs** and their leaders who took part in the **Heritage Schools Cluster training** provided by **Historic England**, we have a **new route for you to try**.

Explore the historic village of Sixpenny Handley and surrounding countryside including the Romano-British settlement at Woodcutts and the Shire Rack, an ancient county boundary that still marks the border between Dorset and Wiltshire.

This new route was created as part of the Chase & Chalke Ancient Ways project, working with local communities and our volunteer Route Checkers to create new routes and access to the countryside. To help us create or check routes email the team at chaseandchalke@cranbornechase.org.uk or visit www.cranbornechase.org.uk/chaseandchalke.

Scouts  **cubs**
1st Woodcutts



1st Woodcutts Scouts making coil pots at Woodcutts Common.



This route and its full description can be downloaded on the explore pages of our website. Scan this QR code to download the full walk.

Points of interest on this route

- A** The name **Sixpenny Handley** (sometimes written 6d Handley) is derived from two medieval hundreds "Sexpena" (Saxon hilltop) and "Hanlega" (high clearing), which by the 14th century were united as the hundred of "Sexpenne et Henle".
- B** **Great Fire of Handley** – On 20 May 1892, the village suffered a major fire which resulted in most of it having to be rebuilt after nearly 200 people were left homeless. So much clothing was donated by well-wishers that it was said a man from Handley could be identified as such because he wore 2, or even 3, waistcoats! Look out for the inscription "Handley Burnt 1892" on a building on the left as you walk up the High Street, this was the bakery until the 1980s.
- C** **Notorious Dorset Smuggler Isaac Gulliver** married innkeeper William Beale's daughter Betty at Sixpenny Handley church on 5 October 1768. Sixpenny Handley is around 30 miles inland, a long way to travel loaded with spirits and lace under the cover of darkness, so Gulliver may well have had another enterprise founded on the availability of deer on the Chase – and a tomb adjoining the local church where 'hot' venison could be stored!
- D** **Handley Common** was common land used by the villagers until WWII when it was used by American troops to ready for D-Day. 1953-59 the extinguishment of commoner's rights was granted, there was much displeasure locally and the land was given to the council who placed the starter farms on it that you see today.
- E** **Coppicing** for hazel is the practice of cutting trees and shrubs to ground level, promoting vigorous re-growth and a sustainable supply of timber for hurdles, stays for thatching and charcoal. Coppicing is also good for wildlife allowing more light and heat to reach the floor allowing flowers such as bluebells, wood anemone, dog violets and St John's Wort to establish, aiding butterflies and other pollinators.
- F** **Shire Rack** – an historic route that marks the boundary between Dorset and Wiltshire.
- G** **Woodcutts Romano-British settlement** – download the Time Traveller on Cranborne Chase Augmented Reality App (Cranborne Chase AR) to find out more!



Dog Violet



Woodcutts

Time Travellers

< CRANBORNE >
< CHASE >

Download the 'Cranborne Chase Augmented Reality' app and see Isaac Gulliver at Sixpenny Handley Church and Woodcutts British Romano settlement.

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Directions

- 1 From Handley Crossroads follow the High Street (be aware of traffic) to the church at the top.
- 2 Go through the lych gate up the church path.
- 3 Go through the gateway at the end of the field, turn left.
- 4 Turn left along the road to the next entrance on the left.
- 5 Arriving at a 'crossroads' at Handley Common turn right.
- 6 At the first crossroads, turn left.
- 7 At the crossroads, by the cottage, take the bridleway left across the golf course (be aware of golfers), through a gate onto Woodcutts Common. Stop at the remains of the British
- 8 Romano settlement and use the **Cranborne Chase AR** to watch it come to life.
- 9 Continue along the path across Woodcutts Common. At a crossroad of paths turn left to go back into the woods.
- 10 Go over stile, turn right and head down the treeline. Cross the B3081 (please take care here) and go down the entrance to the small holding opposite.
- 11 At the end of the entrance on your right you will find the bridleway.
- 12 When you come to an opening take the path on the left, turning right once through the gate.
- 13 At the crossroads turn left, follow the path until it opens out into a track, this leads back to the village.

Our Wonderful Woodlands

The Cranborne Chase landscape has been irrevocably changed over hundreds of years by the activities of local coppice workers, thatching spar makers, hurdle makers and charcoal burners.

A new partnership has been formed to ensure more woodland within the Chase & Chalke Scheme area is being positively managed for their natural, cultural, landscape and economic value. The Hart went to find out more.

Cranborne Chase is home to some large tracts of truly unique ancient woodland.

The special laws which governed the hunting areas of Cranborne Chase meant that land was enclosed and woodland cleared much later than in surrounding areas. Much of the land remained open and actively afforested, while the restriction of certain activities by hunting law meant that ancient woodland was retained. Thomas Hardy in 1891 described it as “a truly venerable tract of forest land, one of the few remaining woodlands in England of undoubted primeval date”.

By the mid-20th century traditional methods of managing the woodland were in sharp decline. Today very few smaller ancient woodlands, woodland belts and wooded boundaries are under any form of management.

Important features such as veteran trees or coppice

stands on old wood banks, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and historic boundaries also need active management as the trees can become prone to wind blow or structural failure.

The demand for coppiced products is healthier now than it has been for decades.

As more experienced foresters reach retirement there is a shortage of those who have the wider professional abilities or technical skills to replace them. What we lack, however, is new entrants to the industry and high-quality coppiced woodland that they can work to develop a thriving rural business.

The demand for material to aid riverbank restoration is ever increasing and hedge layers still require a supply of traditional woodland products (crooks, stakes and binders) to support their work in maintaining hedgerows.

Coppice workers also provide woven hurdles for gardens, as well as bean poles and pea sticks for growing vegetables.

Woodland Skills Training Programme

Working in partnership with woodland owners, the Forestry Commission, the Dorset Coppice Group and expert tutors in woodland management, the Chase & Chalke Landscape Partnership Scheme's Wonderful Woodlands project aims to provide training for adults and young people in woodland skills through the Woodland Skills Training Programme.

This programme will provide accredited qualifications for chainsaw use, brush cutters and tree felling, as well as training in traditional woodland skills such as hedge laying, coppicing, hurdle making and a variety of green woodworking skills. **To find out more visit**

www.cranbornechase.org.uk/chaseandchalke



Many woodlands within the area are no longer actively managed. The local coppicing cycle created its own ecological niches, with many species benefiting such as dormice, tree pipits and heath fritillary butterflies.



The outdoor education team at Boveridge College is helping students to learn transferable life skills. Read more about this programme and how it's linking in with our Chase & Chalke projects on our Chalkeboard blog at www.cranbornechase.org.uk/chalkeboard

CRANBORNE CHASE AONB INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY RESERVE

TOP STARGAZING LOCATIONS

IN CRANBORNE CHASE AONB

...visit them all and discover the magic!

 Sutton Veny Playing Fields

 Dinton Park

 Cley Hill

 Martin Down Nature Reserve

 Ox Drove

 Fontmell and Melbury Downs

 Badbury Rings

 Win Green

 Knowlton Church

 King Alfred's Tower



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Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty

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Discover the secrets of this ancient landscape with augmented reality

See Thomas Hardy at Gold Hill in Shaftesbury

COMING IN 2022 Winkelbury Camp

Hear from Pitt-Rivers at Salisbury Museum and Larmer Tree Gardens

Explore more at Woodcutts Romano-British settlement and hear from a smuggler at Sixpenny Handley

Immerse yourself in the ancient history and beauty of Martin Down

Find out what happened to Blandford Forum after the Great Fire of 1731

Meet Claudia Lucilla in Wimborne Minster

SCAN AND GO!



Download Cranborne Chase AR App

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