

2013

Review of the Orchards of Landscape Importance in Exmoor National Park



1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 1996 a report was produced following a survey of orchards within Exmoor National Park, assessing their landscape importance and recommended sites for inclusion under Policy CLN5 in the Exmoor National Park Local Plan Review 1997. This information was carried forward to inform policy LNC5 Orchards in the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2001 – 2011. As part of the preparation of the Local Plan that will guide development within the National Park to 2031, the orchard survey has been reviewed and data recorded within Exmoor National Park Authority's (ENPA) Geographic Information System which will enable orchards to be identified on the Local Plan Policies Map.

2. Locating orchards

- 2.1 Orchards were located by the following means;
- i) With reference to the 1996 survey records
 - ii) Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map 2010 edition
 - iii) By personal observation and recommendation by others
 - iv) Natural England orchard mapping data
 - v) 2010 aerial photographs with references to earlier versions (dating from 1946)

3. Checking the existence of orchards.

- 3.1 Traditionally orchards would have surrounded farmsteads and villages, but over the last century 80% of Exmoor's orchards have been lost due to development, neglect or change in land use. As many of the orchards identified in 1996 as possible were revisited in 2012. Where orchards were particularly remote or not visible from a public place (e.g. a road, public right of way or open access land), they were checked using 2010 aerial photographs. Where the orchard clearly no longer exists, using the aerial photographic evidence, the site will not have been visited and the site recorded within the 'former orchards' database.

4. Assessing the value of orchards in existence.

- 4.1 In order to maintain consistency, the assessment followed the same methodology as that carried out in 1996 excepting that new orchards were also included (see para 4.3 below). Each orchard was checked against a previously prepared check list. This drew attention to the characteristics that were seen as valuable;
- a) **Orchard to be in existence.** As much boundary as possible to remain and a significant number of trees to remain within the enclosure. One remnant tree was not deemed to be an orchard.
 - b) **Orchard to contribute to the character of the area and to have an impact on the visual scene.** Lowland areas with more favourable growing conditions were

expected to have more orchards and consequently a higher value was placed on them despite their frequency, such as those in the Vale of Porlock. These orchards contribute greatly to their landscape character and are an important element in delineating the landscape character. Upland orchards were however also highly valued due to their rarity. Orchards that could be seen from a public location and especially sites that abutted public spaces were seen as particularly valuable.

- c) **Orchard to have an old character.** Orchards that were made up of standard sized trees that clearly showed signs of maturity were seen to have greater value than young trees on dwarf rootstock or orchards in decline.
- 4.2 Two trees together with the boundary are seen as the minimum requirement to represent the characteristic orchard type space, however the number of trees per size of enclosure is also valuable. The orchard benefits greatly by being visible from a public position.
 - 4.3 In the 1996 survey, the orchard had to retain an orchard character and preferably was of mature standard trees at even spacing, therefore newly planted orchards were excluded. However, the 2013 survey has included new orchards, many of which have been supported through Environmental Stewardship Schemes. Orchards that were changed to become a garden were largely excluded except where the orchard was still a dominant feature.

5. Context

- 5.1 Evidence from the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map shows that some parts of the Exmoor National Park landscape were once dominated by orchards. The 1982 O.S map demarcated 146 sites and the 1996 survey revealed that many of these have disappeared. As part of the 2012/13 survey, the 2010 aerial photographs revealed further orchards that are also no longer present. These former orchards have been recorded by ENPA as part of the map info layer in order to maintain a historic record of their presence.
- 5.2 As a result of the 2012/13 survey review 65 orchards are now recorded in total within Exmoor National Park (see Appendix 1) and 19 are now on the former orchard layer.
- 5.3 Clearly there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of orchards, consistent with national trends, due to a number of factors; therefore the value of remaining orchards is consequently high. In assessing the value of the remaining orchards the fact that these represent the few survivors of a once common landscape feature has been a consideration.

Appendix 1: Orchards of Landscape Importance recorded in 2012/13

Location	Notes	Easting	Northing
BRENDON & COUNTISBURY PARISH			
Hall Farm, Brendon	New orchard. Dwarf rootstock. 2010 aerial photography shows approximately 5 trees	277091	148360
CUTCOMBE PARISH			
Oaktrow Farm, Cutcombe	Small group of orchard trees in corner of enclosure. 2010 aerial photography confirms.	294152	140399
North Hawkwell, Cutcombe	6 or so trees in 1996 survey. Aerial photography still indicating the same.	292659	139957
DUNSTER PARISH			
North of The Rectory, Dunster	Surveyed originally in 1996. 19.09.12 survey - unable to get sufficiently close. 2010 aerial photography shows approximately 5 mature trees.	298979	143785
South of allotments, Dunster	Near to allotments. 2010 aerial photography shows good numbers of trees.	298734	143577
EXFORD PARISH			
Edgcott, Exford	1996 survey shows orchard comprises large trees but visibly difficult. Aerial photography 2010 confirms condition the same.	284759	138827
Coombe Farm, Exford	Approximately 6 mature trees, some fallen. 2010 aerial photography shows what appear to be square tree guards. Good farm orchard, especially at such altitude (300m). Steep slope.	285332	139223
LUCCOMBE PARISH			
South of the School House, Luccombe	Very small. About 15 by 15 metres. May be remnant of a much larger orchard. 5 good large trees.	291173	144483
Wychanger Cottage, Luccombe	Trained trees on northern boundary. Standards to South side. Garden orchard. 2010 aerial photography shows approximately 6 mature trees.	291145	144422
North of The Walled Garden, Luccombe	Garden with tight group of apple trees near to boundary (may be former orchard). Significant impact on street scene.	291063	144710

Location	Notes	Easting	Northing
East of Stables Cottage, Luccombe	Apple trees scattered around whole farm. Good group in area shown. Fine specimens. 2010 aerial photography shows approximately 5 trees remaining.	291120	144779
Culver Cottage, Luccombe	There should have been previous audit as this is on the Local Plan proposals maps, however this is missing. 2010 aerial photography shows good numbers of trees present	291027	144755
West Luccombe Farm, Selworthy	1996 survey reported large farm orchard. Good number of standard trees remain. Some gaps. 10 trees. Surveyed in 2004 (on NE orchard layer) 2013 aerial photography shows new planting.	289880	146286
Horner Farm, Luccombe	Aerial photography 2010 shows approximately 20 young trees.	289832	145520
East of Horner Farm, Luccombe	Surveyed in 1996 and again in 2004 (for NE orchard layer). 2010 aerial photography shows approximately 20 mature trees.	289959	145412
PARRACOMBE PARISH			
Little Close, Parracombe	Small garden orchard. Character suggests the site was an orchard before it was a garden.	267052	144816
Parracombe	2013 aerial photography shows presence of some trees – requires ground truthing.	266849	144819
Parracombe	2010 aerial photography shows approximately 10 trees.	266763	144897
PORLOCK PARISH			
High Bank, north of library Porlock	Over 5 trees seen on 2013 aerial photography.	288437	146805
New Place. Porlock	1996 survey reported plentiful numbers of trees. 2010 aerial photography's show dense woodland canopy. Planning application was approved for 15 houses in 2010. 2013 orchard boundary is still unconfirmed.	288933	147097
Porlock	Known on map as 'Splat Barn Cottage'. Mature trees still remaining 9 - 2010 aerial photography.	288297	146868

Location	Notes	Easting	Northing
Court Place Porlock	Small farm orchard remnant trees remain around perimeter. Rest is rough grass.	288268	146847
South of Watermill, Hawkcombe	1996 survey reported trees on steep slope. On dwarf rootstock or stunted by poor growing conditions. Very complete and well looked after. Lichen growing on trees. 2010 aerial photography shows 5 isolated trees.	288505	146201
South of Orchard House, Porlock	Orchard much reduced in size. Much of it is now housing. What remains is good.	288407	146615
East of Kingarth, Porlock	Orchard on very steep slope. Full of trees and appears to be thriving. Trees are either stunted or on dwarf rootstock.	288661	145985
West of Highercombe, Hawkcombe, Porlock	Tight in about 15 trees jammed into a small space. Could be dwarf rootstock (or stunted). Good example - unusual location. 2010 aerial photography unclear. Appears to be tight planting adjacent to building at SS 8830 4585	288296	145825
East of Bay House, Porlock Weir	Surveyed in 1996. Surveyed again in 2004 for Natural England, on orchard layer. 2010 aerial photography shows approximately 20 mature trees visible.	286648	147685
Methodist Church, Porlock	A few trees noted on 2010 aerial photography but needs to be checked.	288518	146798
Higher Doverhay, Porlock	Back of Higher Doverhay. Good - large trees, well-spaced - could take in fill.	288859	146464
Redway Orchard, Porlock	Steep hill side at the bottom of Porlock Hill. Believed to be commercial orchard until recently. Overgrown with scrub. Trees are stunted or are on rootstock. 2010 aerial photography shows good, robust trees	288130	146542
Opposite Hunting Lodge, Porlock	Set in wooded valley on flat land adjacent to the river. Large standard trees- some large gaps. 15 trees.	287657	145750
North of 'The Firs', Porlock	1996 survey reported that orchard much reduced in size, but what remains is good. 2010 aerial photography shows approximately 10 mature trees visible.	288361	146614

Location	Notes	Easting	Northing
The Tannery, Porlock	1996 survey showed 2 mature trees remaining, not an orchard any more. 2010 aerial photography's show approximately 27 trees planted in 3 rows. 1 mature tree visible.	288638	146839
Porlock Community Orchard	Over 39 trees. Not numbered on GIS. On Natural England orchard layer	288059	146772
SELWORTHY & MINEHEAD WITHOUT PARISH			
Pit orchard, Porlock	No previous record. Mature trees on 2010 aerial photography.	289476	147590
Abingdon Cross	2010 aerial photography shows two rows of approximately 20 trees in total.	289513	147493
Exmoor House, Porlock	1996 survey - good collection of trees in what has become garden. Orchard may be remnant of former larger orchard. 2010 survey appears to be the same.	289291	146742
West of Allerford House	4 or 5 trees remain.	290402	146897
Myrtle Cottage, Allerford	2010 aerial photography shows orchard characteristic. 5 trees shown.	290390	147045
South of Allerford village	1 or 2 trees tucked into what looks like a former quarry. 2010 aerial photography shows a number of mature trees remaining 5+.	290467	146735
Piles Mill, Allerford	2013 aerial photography shows orchard characteristics and approximately 6 mature trees remaining.	290627	146627
East of Piles Mill, Allerford	1996 survey suggests planting up would be beneficial. 2010 aerial photography shows over 10 trees.	290672	146566
West of Brandish Street Farm, Allerford	Excellent example. Almost intact and very large.	290559	146773
South of Piles Mill, Allerford	Ditches, good mature trees. 2010 aerial photography shows a good distribution of trees.	290577	146413
West of Piles Mill, Allerford	Bee hives. 2010 aerial photography shows approximately 8 trees of varying sizes.	290515	146533
North of Bossington Farm	Only the tops of trees visible over boundary wall. 2010 aerial photography shows over 7 mature trees	289650	148004
South of Bossington Farm Bossington	No change since 1996 survey. Approximately 5 trees, good condition (Resurveyed 19/09/12)	289682	147909

Location	Notes	Easting	Northing
Bossington NT Car Park	National Trust Car Park. Main car park has 6 newly planted trees and 6 established/old trees. Overflow car park includes walnut and cherry.	289778	148035
North of West Lynch Cottage , Selworthy	Good numbers of trees visible in 2010 aerial photography (approximately 20)	290189	147737
West Lynch 1, Selworthy (East of tennis court)	1996 survey - Orchard trees present but character is very much one of garden. New planting in this area.	290162	147545
Tivington Knowle, Selworthy	1996 survey- a few remnant trees and many young trees. 2010 aerial photography still same.	293528	144524
Selworthy Farm	Appears on GIS as Orchards. No number assigned. Aerial photography 2010 confirms 1996 report - set on steep slope. Almost all former trees in existence.	291658	146752
East Lynch, Selworthy	1996 survey indicated that there were few trees for the size of the site. Would benefit planting. In 2004 Natural England orchard survey. National Trust owned.	292814	146164
TIMBERSCOMBE PARISH			
Ford Bridge 3, West of Wanneroo Farm, Timberscombe	1996 survey - Many fallen trees, large. 2012 resurvey- approximately 5 trees remaining.	295067	142181
Ford Bridge, Timberscombe	Surveyed in 1996. On Natural England orchard layer (surveyed in 2004). 2010 aerial photography shows approximately 15 trees visible.	294913	141946
Timberscombe	This site was not easy to see - only seen from a distance; however judgement made that the orchard was very similar to what was surveyed in 1996.	295618	142315
Knowle, Timberscombe	1996 survey reported newly planted orchard (possible pear, very upright trees), standards in grass. Surveyed in 2004 and on Natural England orchard layer. 2010 aerial photography, clearly visible.	295980	143072
Timberscombe, north of Sunnyside bungalow	2010 aerial photography shows new planting approximately 20 trees.	295526	142379

Location	Notes	Easting	Northing
Timberscombe, the Old Dairy	Approximately 13 trees seen on 2010 aerial photography.	295457	142195
Timberscombe, Wannaroo Farm	Approximately 7 trees seen on 2010 aerial photography.	295330	142258
The Old Bakehouse	New tree guards installed.	289671	148048
WOOTTON COURTENAY PARISH			
East of All Saints Church, Wootton Courtenay	Small domestic orchard. Still orchard and not garden.	293850	143418
Wootton Courtenay	Over 5 trees	294360	143219
Ranscombe Farm, Wootton Courtenay	1996 survey reported it as being a very good example. Significant number of trees but in need of management. Surveyed in 2005 (NE orchards layer). 2010 aerial photography shows trees planted at SS9467 4321.	294717	143221
Wootton Lodge, Wootton Courtenay	1996 survey- some very attractive trained trees. 2010 aerial photography shows little change.	295444	142983