

Part 2: The Story of The Exmoor Landscape





Exmoor National Park

2.1 Location and Boundaries of the National Park

2.1.1 Exmoor National Park is located in south-west England, and includes land in both West Somerset and North Devon. It is one of the smallest of Britain's National Parks, covering 267 square miles (693 square km), yet contains some of the finest and most diverse landscapes in Britain including moorland, farmland, woodland and coast. It stretches from the outskirts of Combe Martin in the west to the village of Elworthy in the east. In the

south, the town of Dulverton forms a gateway to the National Park, and in the north the boundary is formed by coastal cliffs abutting the Bristol Channel. The local service centres of Dulverton, Porlock and Lynton & Lynmouth are within the National Park, along with numerous smaller villages. The location and boundaries of Exmoor National Park are shown below.



2.2 National Park Purposes and Special Qualities

2.2.1 In common with other National Parks in England and Wales, Exmoor National Park Authority has the following statutory purposes:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities by the public.

The National Park Authority is obliged to oversee and lead action to achieve these purposes, and, whilst doing so, seek to foster social and economic well-being of the National Park's communities. The 'Sandford Principle' states that *if it appears that there is a conflict between those purposes, the National Park Authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area*¹. 'Relevant Authorities' should have regard to National Park purposes when making decisions or carrying out activities relating to or affecting land

¹ 1995 Environment Act, Section 62

within the National Park. Authorities and public bodies must show they have fulfilled this duty². Where their activities outside National Parks might have an impact inside them, the Government says they should have regard to National Park purposes³.

2.2.2 Exmoor National Park was designated in 1954, in recognition of its significance and value at a national level. It was included on the list of potential National Parks contained within the 1947 Hobhouse Report because of its *'spectacular coastline', 'fine heather, bracken and grass moorland' and 'beautiful wooded valleys'*. The overall intimate character of this soft upland with its *'mosaic of contrasts'* in a relatively small area made it unique amongst National Parks. The Hobhouse Report also highlighted *'antiquities in great profusion on Exmoor, including stone circles,*

barrows, hut circles as well as earthworks' the 'notable wildlife' (including red deer) and stated that Exmoor is *'first rate country for motoring, and for walking and riding'*.

2.2.3 These qualities identified in the 1947 Hobhouse Report are still recognisable in Exmoor's Special Qualities, as defined in the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan and shown in the box below. Exmoor National Park's Special Qualities include physical, cultural and perceptual characteristics of the landscape. The importance of protecting the landscape and cultural heritage of National Parks is set out in the Government Vision and Circular 2010, which states: Cultural heritage and landscape are fundamental to quality of place and, as they are central to attractiveness, distinctiveness, diversity and quality of place in the Parks, should be protected and enhanced⁴.

Exmoor's Special Qualities

- Large areas of open moorland providing a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity rare in southern Britain.
- A distinct and diverse landscape of softly rounded hills and ridges, with heather and grass moors, spectacular coastal views, deeply incised wooded valleys, high sea cliffs, fast flowing streams, traditional upland farms and characteristic beech hedgebanks.
- A landscape mostly free from intrusive development such as major roads, power lines, military activities, quarrying, mining, large scale developments, light pollution and clutter.
- A mosaic of habitats supporting a great diversity of wildlife including herds of wild red deer, rich lichen communities, rare fritillary butterflies, bats, and other species uncommon in southern Britain.
- A complex and rich historic landscape that reflects how people have lived in, exploited and enjoyed Exmoor over the past 8000 years, including burial mounds on ridges, discrete stone settings, ancient farmsteads and settlements, picturesque villages and historic estates.
- A deeply rural community closely linked to the land with strong local traditions and ways of life.
- A farmed landscape with locally distinctive breed such as Red Devon cattle, Devon Closewool and Exmoor Horn sheep, and herds of free living Exmoor Ponies.
- An exceptional rights of way network and extensive areas of open country, providing superb opportunities for walking, riding and cycling.
- A landscape that provides inspiration and enjoyment to visitors and residents alike.

² Section 11A of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by Section 62(2) of the Environment Act (1995).

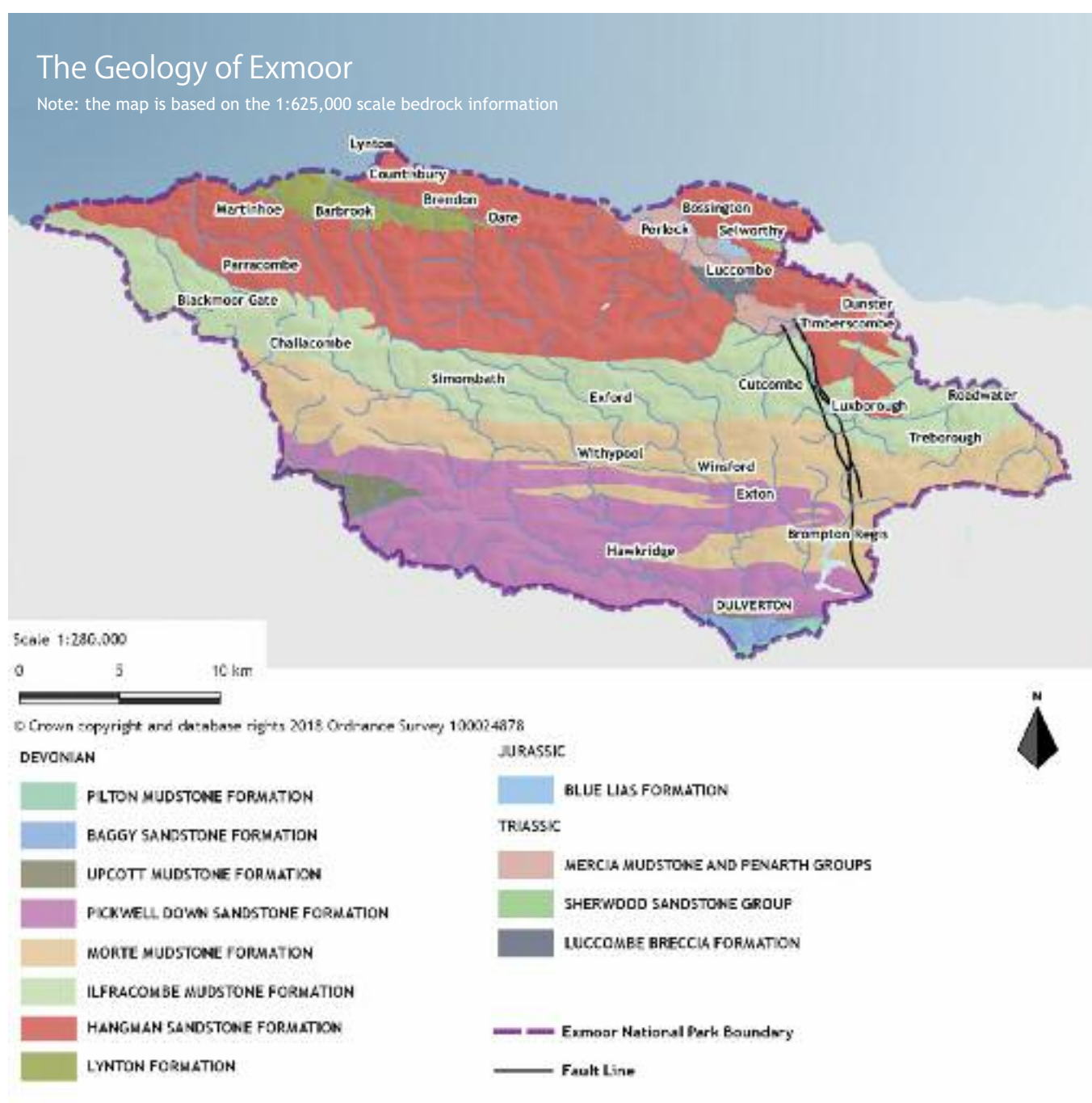
³ DEFRA (2005) Guidance Note: *Duties on relevant authorities to have regard to the purposes of National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads* DEFRA, London (Paras 4-8) and Natural England (2011) *England's statutory landscape designations: a practical guide to your duty of regard*

⁴ *English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010*, Para. 49

2.3 The Natural Environment

2.3.1 The majority of the rocks underlying Exmoor are from the Devonian period (c. 407-345 million years ago). They form three broad ridges, running east-west, which have been cut by river valleys, as shown in **Map 2**. The oldest Devonian rocks are found in the north of the National Park, and the youngest in the south. The oldest (Lower Devonian) rocks are the hard slates and sandstones found in the majestic grey cliffs around Lynton. The Hangman Sandstone Formation of the Middle Devonian period form a band running east-west

across the National Park. They are resistant to erosion and weathering, and make up the highest parts of Exmoor: Dunkery and The Chains massif, and Selworthy Beacon and Croydon Hill. They can also be seen in the coastal cliffs of Hangman Hill, and between The Foreland and Minehead. The younger Ilfracombe Slates Formation (Middle and Upper Devonian) forms a band of sandstones and slates to the south, running through Simonsbath, Exford & Wheddon Cross.



2.3.2 The Devonian sandstones weather to create red soils, as can be seen in the eastern part of the National Park. Small pockets of limestone occur in the Ilfracombe Slates Formation, which were quarried and burnt to create lime to help neutralise acid soils. Further south again, a band of the Upper Devonian Morte Slates Formation and Pickwell Down Sandstone Formation form Winsford Hill, Withypool Common and the Brendon Hills, as well as Exmoor's steep southern escarpment (North Molton Ridge, West and East Anstey Commons and Haddon Hill).

2.3.3 In the north-east of the National Park, around Porlock and Minehead, are younger Triassic rocks (formed c. 251-200 million years ago). These include conglomerate rocks containing pebbles, with a distinctive 'hummocky' local topography. More recent deposits include valley-floor material deposited by rivers, and the peat of the high moorlands.

2.3.4 Many different processes have acted on the underlying rocks over millennia to create the landscape which we see today, particularly erosion by wind and water. During (and following) the last Ice Age (c. 10,000 years ago) Exmoor had a periglacial climate. It is thought that the crags visible at the Valley of Rocks formed at this time through a process of frost-shattering. This occurs when water in the cracks within rocks repeatedly freezes and expands, weakening the rock and eventually causing it to shatter. The scree slopes of the high moors and coastal cliffs may well have similar origins. There are other examples of periglacial features which add to the character and distinctiveness of the Exmoor landscape. The deep combs of the high moors (e.g. Long Chains Combe and Woodbarrow Hangings) are simultaneously dramatic and tiny, with the outside world seeming to disappear from within. The dramatic feature of the Punchbowl on Winsford Hill forms a distinctive landform, although its origins are currently being debated. Mounds on valley floors (e.g. Alse Barrow, Long Barrow, Flexbarrow) were caused by rivers in the ancient past cutting round harder rocks on the valley floor. The fact that many

are named indicates their local importance and contribution to the landscape. There are also examples of ancient soil slips, such as Culbone Woods, and the 'Giant's Chair' on Grabbist Hill which is further defined by a prehistoric enclosure built deliberately around it.

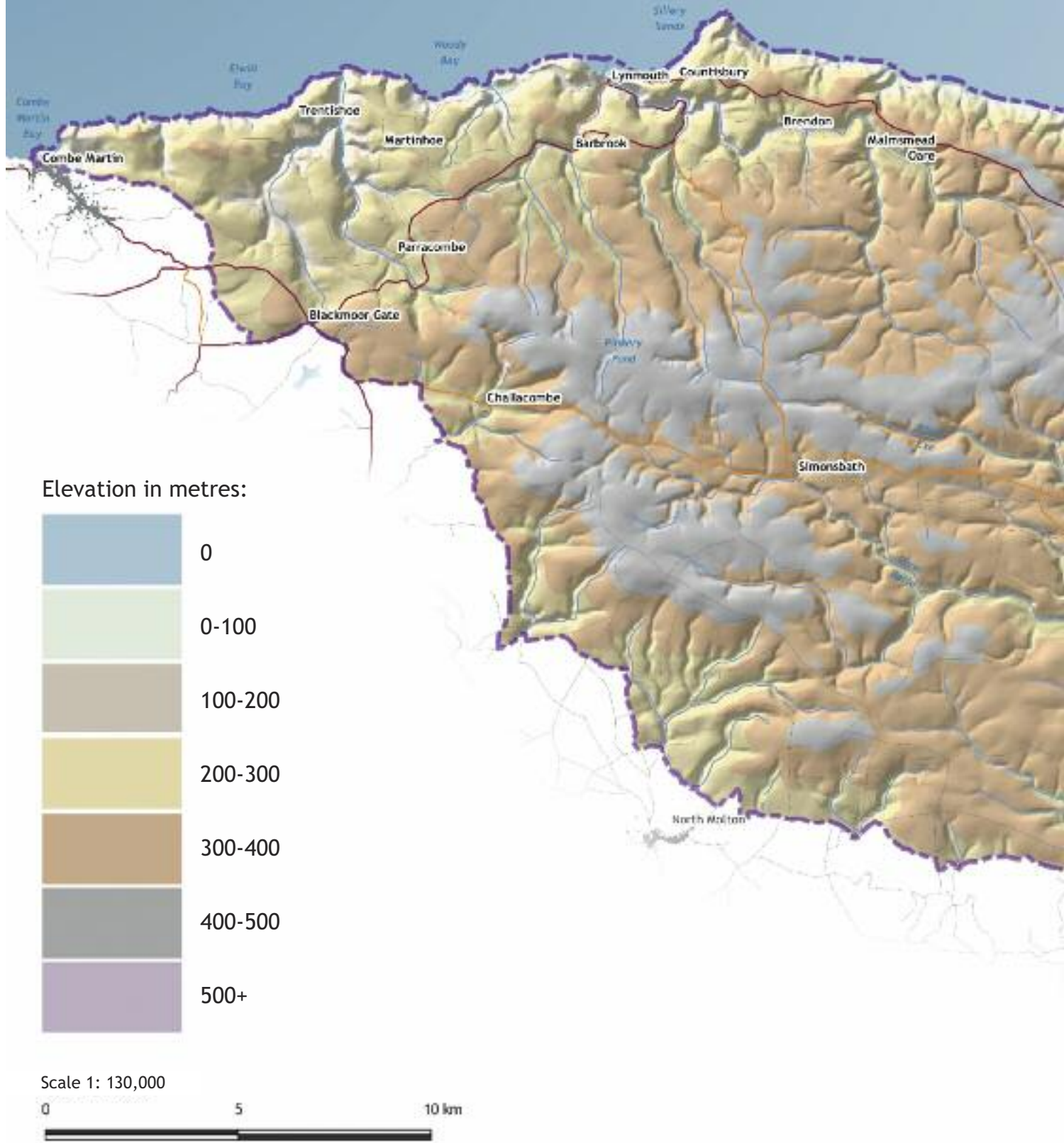
2.3.5 There are many coastal features caused by erosion of rocks by the sea, including caves, arches, bays and wave-cut platforms. Sea levels have fluctuated over time, and at the end of the last Ice Age sea levels were much lower, with the Severn Estuary a dry valley. This coastal plain was wooded, and the remains of a fossil forest can still be seen in Porlock Bay at low tide. The shingle beach at Porlock is thought to date from c. 8,000 years ago, as ice melted, sea levels rose and cliffs to the west eroded, providing the stones for the beach.

2.3.6 Erosion by rivers has also taken place, with steep valleys cut (incised) into the rock. The highest ridge of Exmoor forms a watershed between rivers running north into the Bristol Channel, and rivers running south into the Taw and Exe.

2.3.7 Pollen analysis shows that, as the climate warmed, the landscape gradually became colonised by trees including Scots pine, birch and hazel, then by oak, elm, alder and lime. It is likely that all of Exmoor was wooded until c. 4000BC, when the process of clearance by humans began.

2.3.8 Exmoor's varied geology, landform and climate (particularly high levels of rainfall) have led to a wide range of soils which in turn support a diversity of vegetation and land uses. Exmoor's unique combination of geology, soils and altitude means that the moorlands found on Exmoor are different to the moorlands found elsewhere in the UK (including nearby Dartmoor because the geology is so different). The altitude of Exmoor is generally lower than in other moorland areas, and the climate is strongly maritime. Although rainfall is high, it is not as high as in the north-west of England or in Scotland. Consequently different soil processes take place and on Exmoor it is generally the acidity of the soil which dictates the distribution of moorland.

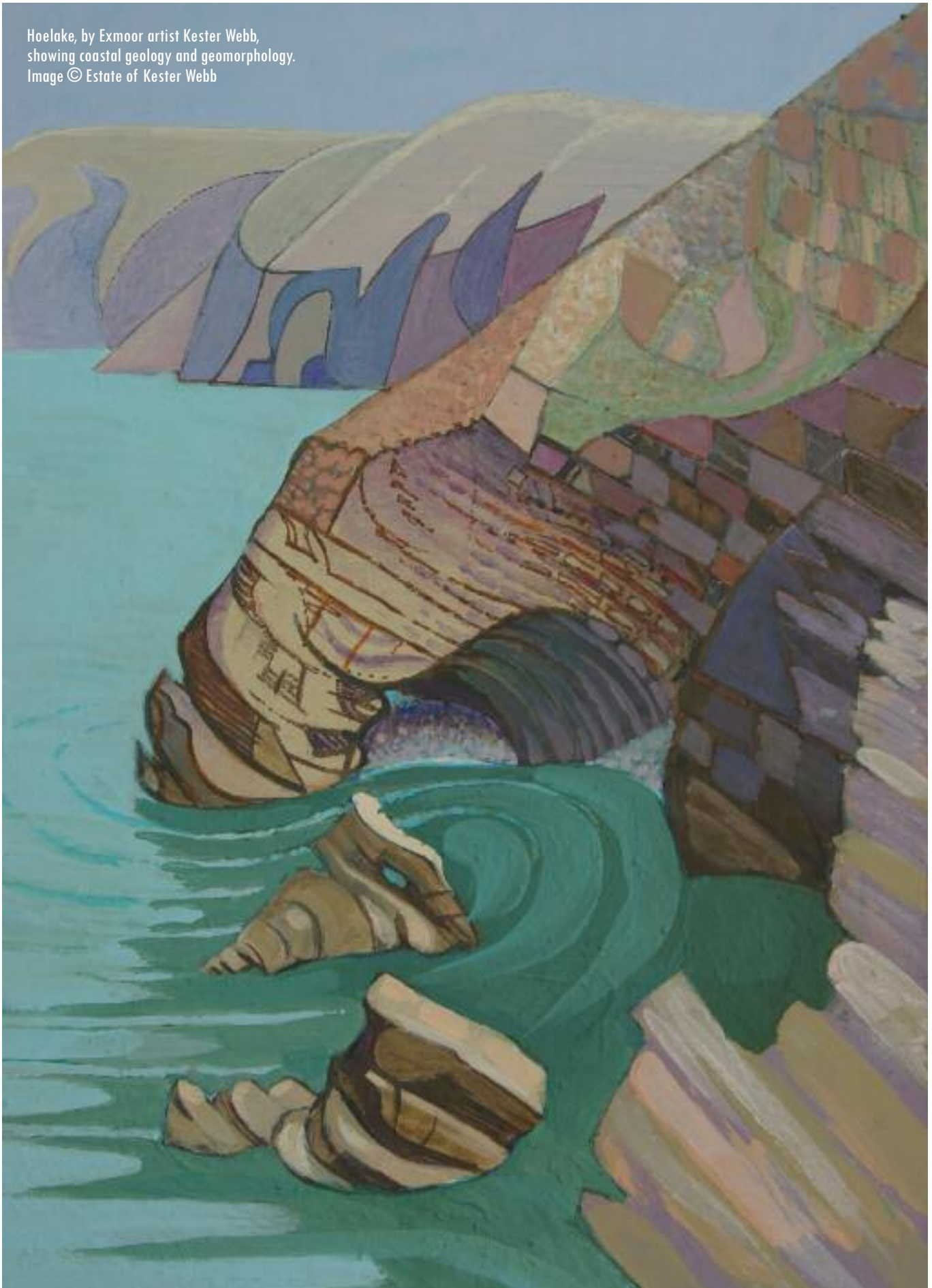
Map 2: Landform of Exmoor



© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100024878



Hoelake, by Exmoor artist Kester Webb, showing coastal geology and geomorphology. Image © Estate of Kester Webb



Red deer on heather moorland.



2.3.9 The soils which have formed over the Devonian rocks are generally free draining and quite fertile, particularly in the east of the National Park. In the Vale of Porlock, relatively recent deposition of alluvium by rivers has resulted in productive loamy agricultural soils. In contrast, the soils on higher ground are relatively infertile, being acid and waterlogged. The higher parts of Exmoor contain freely-draining acid loamy soils over rock; very acid loamy upland soils with a wet peaty surface; slowly permeable wet very acid upland soils with a peaty surface, and blanket bog peat soils. The subtle variation in soils is one factor which is reflected in the moorland vegetation and land use.

2.3.10 Exmoor's soils generally developed from frost-shattered material deposited in periglacial conditions. As the climate warmed and vegetation colonised the land, loamy brown soils developed under deciduous forests. However, clearance of the forests (associated with prehistoric settlement) led to the accumulation of blanket peat across the uplands. The deepest areas of peat are on The Chains and in the valley mires. In many moorland-edge areas, nineteenth century land reclamation strategies including liming, burning, half-ploughing and re-seeding created layers of new soil over the original acid peaty soils.

One of the characteristics of the Exmoor landscape is the visual compositions formed by farmland, moorland and woodland



2.3.11 Exmoor's vegetation, whilst 'natural', has been strongly influenced by human land management over millennia. Centuries of grazing by cattle, sheep and moorland ponies have enabled the establishment of swathes of heather and grass moorland, which provide habitats for a range of insects (including rare fritillary butterflies) and birds. The woodlands which cloak the steep valley sides and coastal valleys were managed for centuries as sources of wood for building, fuel, tools and charcoal. Today they remain rich and diverse habitats which support a very wide range of mammals, birds and insects, as well as many different plants from Atlantic oak trees to rare lichens which thrive in the clean air. Farmland also provides habitats for a diverse range of species, including flowers, insects and birds. Of the wide range of wildlife which Exmoor's landscapes support, the red deer (which tend to live on the margins of woodland) are perhaps the most well-known. Exmoor's rivers and streams remain vital for a rich diversity of flora and fauna.

2.4 Climate

2.4.1 Exmoor's climate is strongly influenced by altitude, aspect and proximity to the sea. In general, there is a pattern of warm summers and cool winters, with higher than average rainfall (mostly falling in the autumn and winter). The Exmoor uplands regularly receive over 2000mm of rain per year (compared to the UK national average of 885mm per year), and snow is not uncommon on high ground. The prevailing wind is from the south-west. Uplands are often exposed to strong winds, but valleys (particularly north and east-facing) can be more sheltered. The erosive properties of water and wind are apparent in the ongoing geomorphological processes, and in the patterns and shapes of vegetation.

2.5 Historical Background

Early Inhabitants

2.5.1 The earliest known archaeological finds on Exmoor are from the late Mesolithic period (c. 8000 years ago). These people were hunter-gatherers, and finds include small flint flakes called microliths, which were used as tools. It is likely that hunter-gatherers would have exploited the woodlands and the coastal plain (now under the Bristol Channel) for meat, fish, shellfish and edible plants. To date, concentrations of Mesolithic material have been found at Larkbarrow, Hawkcombe Head and on the foreshore at Porlock, with more sites continuing to be discovered.

2.5.2 There are no confirmed Neolithic sites on Exmoor, although there is a possible tor enclosure at Little Hangman Hill, and possible mortuary enclosures to the south of Chapman Barrows. The Long Stone is the largest standing stone on Exmoor, and may be Neolithic in date.

2.5.3 The analysis of pollen preserved in peat suggests that episodes of woodland clearance began in about 4000BC, during the Neolithic Period, presumably as people moved from a nomadic existence towards a more settled agriculture, and increased in the Bronze Age. Exmoor contains approximately 45 known prehistoric settlement sites of hut circles or house platforms, which is a far higher concentration of sites than elsewhere in Somerset or Devon (excluding Dartmoor).

2.5.4 Exmoor also contains a range of unique and intriguing monuments known as stone settings, which are thought to date from the early Bronze Age. The stone settings comprise relatively small stones (typically between 20cm and 50cm in height) placed upright in a variety of forms; both random arrangements and in geometric shapes (triangles, diamonds, crosses, L-shapes etc.) Today they are difficult to find, often being part-buried in peat or vegetation in isolated locations. There are also eleven known stone rows, comprising parallel rows of small upright stones. Numerous barrows (burial mounds) from the Bronze Age survive, usually on hill-top or ridge-top locations, although many have been looted or crudely excavated. Traces of prehistoric field systems survive in parts of the landscape which have not been disturbed by subsequent farming or settlement. The early Bronze Age field system at Lanacombe has been radio carbon-dated from charcoal samples, and includes small cairns and timber stakes. It may be related to the stone settings nearby, but their relative dates are not yet understood. This field system is more ephemeral than the later Bronze Age field systems at the Valley of Rocks and Hoar Moor/ Codsand, which contained more substantial stone banks, and appear to be associated with hut circles.



The East Pinsford Stone Setting Photo © Exmoor National Park Authority

Iron Age and Roman

2.5.5 Exmoor contains an impressive array of earthworks dating from the Iron Age. Most appear to be defended sites, including hillforts, a promontory fort and hillslope enclosures. Many of the sites are in prominent locations overlooking river valleys, for example hillforts at Gallox Hill and Grabbist Hill controlling the Avill Valley (presumably an early routeway to the coast at Porlock), and the series of defensive 'castles' on the sides of the Barle Valley. Other examples overlook the Lyn Valley, Bray Valley and the north coast at Countisbury.

2.5.6 Known Roman sites are limited to coastal fortlets/ signal stations at Martinhoe and Old Burrow and a substantial fort at Rainsbury. However, there is also evidence of extraction and working of iron ore during the late prehistoric and Roman periods, for example at Sherracombe Ford and Roman Lode. A small lead wheel of Iron Age or Roman date (possibly a votive offering) was recently found during an excavation of a much earlier site at Porlock Stone Circle.

Early Medieval

2.5.7 As elsewhere in the UK, archaeological evidence for the post-Roman period is relatively scanty, although there is some place name evidence for Saxon settlement. For example, cott and wyrth names are thought to represent small, low-status settlements. Saxon woodland names include *wudu*, *bearu*, *graf*, *hyrst* and *holt*, and the suffix *leah* (now *-ley*) indicates woodland clearance. Inscribed stones have been found from this period, including the Caractacus stone on Winsford Hil, which contains an inscription *Caraaci Nepus* – kinsman of Caractacus. An inscribed cross on the earlier stone row on Culbone Hill (which also forms part of a parish boundary) suggests Christian re-use of earlier monuments. Culbone church is thought to be of Saxon origin, and is dedicated to St Bueno, a Welsh Saint of the sixth and seventh centuries. The walls of the existing building date from the twelfth century.

2.5.8 By the Domesday survey in 1088, the existing parish structure was largely in place, along with many of the churches, villages, and manors still seen today.

The Medieval Period

2.5.9 The medieval settlement of Exmoor comprised a network of small villages (often located at river crossing points), and scattered farms. There are occasional larger towns (such as Dunster, granted to William de Mohun) by William the Conqueror. The relatively warm climate suited mixed farming, with both crops and livestock grown. Extensive areas of ridge and furrow visible on land now pasture or moorland are the remnants of decades of medieval ploughing for crops. The irregular patterns of hedged medieval fields may be seen in lower valleys throughout the National Park, particularly around villages. There are also examples of medieval farms and settlements which were too marginal to survive, and which were subsequently abandoned.

2.5.10 Higher land was generally used as common, where villagers with commoner's rights were able to graze animals, gather bracken for animal bedding, gorse and heather for animal feed and peat for fuel. Animals were driven up onto the common land in the spring, using a network of lanes and tracks, many of which are still visible in today's landscape. Also visible are the stone-faced banks which marked the common boundaries.

2.5.11 The central part of Exmoor was a royal hunting forest probably from Saxon times onwards managed for hunting, and subject to Forest Law. Access into the area was restricted, which inhibited settlement and farming, and therefore had a strong impact on how the landscape subsequently developed. The open landscape of the Forest is very different from the mosaic of small fields, farms and villages found in the surrounding valleys. The vegetation of the former Royal Forest is also different from the surrounding moorland, being dominated by grass rather than heather, which gives it a subtly different character. The Forest boundary followed pre-existing features in the landscape such as barrows, stones and hill summits. These can be seen on a map of 1675 which shows the Royal Forest in the centre, surrounded by the parishes' common lands, and with the villages beyond. The headwaters of the Rivers Barle and Exe are also shown.

2.5.12 A wealth of features survive from the medieval period in today's landscape, including churches, castles, houses, lanes, bridges, fords, farms, mills, tracks and field boundaries. Some extensive areas of medieval field systems of strip lynchets survive, such as around Challacombe and Parracombe. As well as physical features, the names of villages, farms, fields, gateways and crossroads also help to tell the story of the medieval landscape. Travel was very difficult, with few wheeled vehicles,

and most people and goods moved on foot or horseback. Water travel was also extremely important, and settlements developed at coastal access points such as Porlock, Minehead, Dunster and Lynmouth. At low tide it is possible to see medieval stone fish weirs off the coast, where fish were trapped behind V-shaped stone walls. Woodland was also a vital resource, managed for charcoal, fuel, building timber, the tanning process, and materials for making tools and baskets.

Medieval packhorse bridge, Horner





Warren Farm - a typical Knight Estate farm, with earlier pillow mounds in the field below

The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

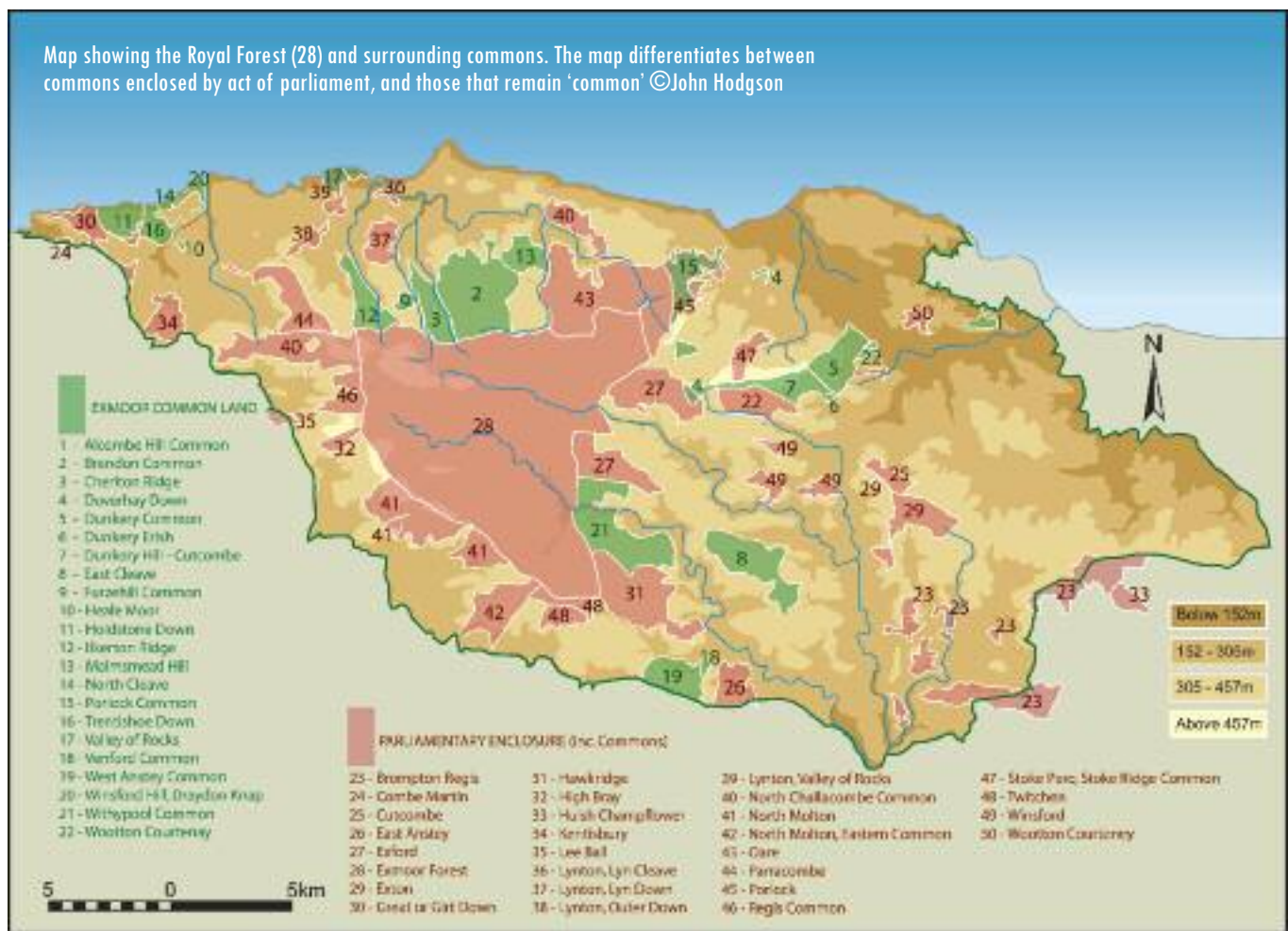
2.5.13 The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw major changes to the way of life on Exmoor, driven by wider agricultural, social and technological developments.

2.5.14 Farming on Exmoor changed dramatically following the sale of the former Royal Forest to the Knight family in 1818. The Knights were keen innovators, and had a vision to turn the moorland into productive farmland. They invested huge amounts of time, energy and money into draining and ploughing moorland and improving the quality of the soil, including liming to reduce its acidity. Limekilns were often built in coastal locations due to the relative ease of transport of materials by boat. Extensive drainage systems were constructed, and large rectilinear fields (often with beech shelterbelts) were carved out of the moorland. Houses were built for tenants, new roads constructed (revolutionising transport in the area) and a new village built at Simonsbath. The Knight family lived at Simonsbath House, at the heart of the estate. Several innovative model farms were built, which used water or horse power to run machinery, and which had complicated water management systems. These

included gutter systems or catch meadows, where warm water was allowed to run over grass in the early spring to warm the soil and increase the growing season, reducing the need for fodder. Although arable farming was not a success, the productivity of livestock farming, particularly sheep, greatly increased.

2.5.15 The appearance of large parts of Exmoor is the result of nineteenth century enclosure and improvement: large square fields, remote symmetrical farmhouses, impressive sheepfolds and regular drainage channels. One of the most iconic features of the Exmoor upland landscape dating from this time are the straight beech hedgebanks with their sculptural silhouettes.

2.5.16 The process of Parliamentary Enclosure (when areas of common land were parcelled up into private ownership) also took place on Exmoor in the nineteenth century, and the following map shows the areas affected by this process in red. Some of the newly-enclosed lands were allotted to individuals, some to estates, and some to parishes (hence names such as 'Porlock Allotment'). Some commons were not enclosed and remain common land.



2.5.17 Recreational use of landscapes grew in popularity during the nineteenth century. The development of both trade and tourism was enabled by the southward expansion of the railway from Bristol to Taunton and Exeter in the 1840s. The railway network continued to spread around Exmoor with the development of lines including Taunton to Barnstaple, Barnstaple to Lynton, and Taunton to Minehead. These improvements in transport enabled tourists to come to the area for short visits, and the coastal towns of Minehead, Porlock, and Lynton & Lynmouth grew to accommodate the increasing numbers of people who came to enjoy the spectacular scenery and fresh air. A further resort was planned at Woody Bay, but failed to take off. Many of the hotels and inns on Exmoor date from this period, for example Hunters Inn. As well as easier access, changed attitudes towards moorland scenery (following influential Romantic poets including Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey), and the popularity of the novel 'Lorna Doone' further increased the numbers

of visitors to Exmoor. These writings are described more fully in the following section.

2.5.18 Several estates on Exmoor also thrived in the nineteenth century, with recreation an important aspect of their management. The Acland family's estate at Holnicote combined agricultural productivity with sporting pastimes, particularly hunting. Carriage rides were also popular. The coastal estates and villas such as Ashley Combe (with its Italian-style gardens) and Glenthorne remain part of today's landscapes, although much of Ashley Combe is now ruinous. Some of the species planted, such as Monterey pine, help to define the character of today's landscape, but others (such as rhododendron) continue to cause management headaches. In the east of the National Park, the estates of Nettlecombe and Combe Sydenham have a more parkland character, with specimen trees and avenues carefully set in grazed grassland to create pleasing compositions.

2.5.19 The nineteenth century also saw a rise in industrial land uses on Exmoor, although these have now declined and only leave subtle traces in the landscape. Mining for iron and other ores took place in many locations throughout Exmoor, with the greatest concentrations of iron mines in the Brendon Hills. Traces of mineral extraction and working exist, including the remains of buildings and piles of spoil. The route of the West Somerset Mineral Railway (WSMR), which ran between the Brendon Hills mines and the coast at Watchet, can still be traced for much of its length. In its mining heyday it contained two productive mines, a goods yard and stores, two limekilns, a station, a chapel and rows of terraced cottages for the miners and their families. Today, the Methodist chapel is still in use, and some of the other buildings can be traced in the landscape, but the overall impression is of peaceful farmland and woodland. There was also an attempt to build a railway to transport materials from all the mines at Simonsbath to the coast at

Porlock. The scheme was quickly abandoned, but the half-completed trackbed survives as an earthwork on Porlock Allotment.

2.5.20 There are numerous limekilns within Exmoor National Park, as the lime created by burning limestone reduced the acidity of the soil when it was spread on fields. Many are in coastal locations, as it was easier to transport the limestone by boat than by road. Others are located close to limestone outcrops.

The Twentieth Century Onwards

2.5.21 Change continued throughout the twentieth century and continues to the present day. The 1920s saw extensive coniferous plantation planted on heathland in the eastern part of the National Park, around Dunster and in the Brendon Hills. There are also patches of coniferous plantation elsewhere, for example in the wooded valleys in the south and on Culbone Hill, and some ancient woodland was cleared to make way for more productive conifer plantations.

Ruined winding house at the top of the WSMR incline, Brendon Hill (constructed 1859)



2.5.22 World War Two saw much of the central part of Exmoor (around Brendon Common) and North Hill requisitioned for army use. The area was used for tank and infantry training, small arms testing, chemical weapons testing and communications. Some archaeology was damaged in the process (for example the Knight farm at Larkbarrow was used as a target and flattened), although many known antiquities were marked with metal 'antiquity stars' on posts to deter damage by artillery or tank tracks. This era has also left its own mark on Exmoor's landscapes, including the remains of communications buildings on North Hill, and earthworks of tank targets, firing ranges and 'slit' trenches used for training. Low-lying parts of the coast were vulnerable to attack, and WW2 pillboxes (constructed of local beach boulders) may be seen behind the beach at Bossington and Porlock Weir. The gun emplacement on Countisbury Hill is thought to date from the First World War, and it is possible that other military training also took place on Exmoor at that time.

2.5.23 The Lynmouth Flood disaster of 1952 (which affected many parts of Exmoor as well as Lynmouth) brought national attention to the area. Following unprecedented intensity of rainfall on the upland catchment, streams became torrents and burst their banks, taking trees, bridges and anything else with them. The debris caused a dam, which burst and sent a wall of water through Lynmouth which killed 34 people, completely destroyed 90 buildings and severely damaged many properties.

2.5.24 Exmoor was designated a National Park in 1954, and in 1958 the Exmoor Society was formed, initially to campaign against further afforestation of the uplands. In the 1970s concern was growing about the ploughing of moorland for agricultural use, made possible by more powerful machinery, and government grants. The resulting Portchester Inquiry identified the need for proper mapping of land on Exmoor. Maps produced by Lord Porchester in 1977 included A Map of Moor and Heath, and A Map of Moorland Conservation on Exmoor. Production of maps showing land of high conservation value (known as '*Section 3 Maps*') is now a statutory duty of National Park Authorities. The Porchester Report led to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - the foundation of much of current wildlife protection. The Porchester Report

also identified the need for land management agreements. This led to the UK's first agri-environment scheme - the Exmoor Farm Conservation Scheme - which compensated farmers for the income lost through not ploughing their land. Eventually, this developed into the national agri-environment grant schemes which reward farmers for managing their land in ways which directly benefit the environment. Past decades have seen changes in the landscape in response to farm payment schemes, for example changes from headage to area-based payments for livestock have resulted in lower grazing numbers which has affected moorland vegetation patterns.

2.5.25 Within living memory, there have been many other changes to farming practices which have affected the landscape. For example bracken is no longer gathered for use as animal bedding, and gorse is no longer gathered for use as a hot-burning fuel. As these plants are no longer controlled (except through grazing, or deliberate intervention) they spread and become dominant vegetation over a wider area. Peat was used as a domestic fuel until the 1970s, when peat cutting ceased following pressure to protect the moorlands. Traditional shepherding of moorland flocks has died out, making it more difficult to control which areas are grazed. A further change in land management in recent decades is the increase in commercial game shoots, which now contribute a significant part of the area's economy.

2.5.26 The area has remained a popular tourist destination, particularly after Butlin's Holiday Camp was built at Minehead in 1962. The twentieth century saw a growth in holiday accommodation including bed and breakfast establishments, campsites and Youth Hostels. Old farm buildings and cottages were converted to self-catering accommodation.

2.5.27 Exmoor's most recent designation is its International Dark Sky Reserve status. In 2011 it became the first Dark Sky Reserve in Europe, and continues to work with neighbouring planning authorities, businesses and communities to further reduce light pollution.

2.6 Exmoor in Art and Literature

2.6.1 Exmoor has inspired artists, writers and poets for centuries, and a range of images and writings, from the seventeenth century to the present day, appear throughout this document to illustrate the qualities of the landscape.

2.6.2 Some of the earliest surviving paintings of Exmoor are those commissioned by local gentry to record their estates, such as the early eighteenth century *Four Views from Dunster Castle* attributed to Robert Griffier. Early traveller's records also survive, including those of John Leland, who visited the area in 1543:

...There rennith at this place caullid Simonsbath a ryber betwixt to great morisch hilles in a depe botom, and ther is a bridge of woodde over this water. The water in somer most comunely rennith flat apon stones easy to be passed ober, but when raynes cum and stormes of wyntre it ragith and ys depe.

'John Leland's Itinerary', John Leland (1543)

2.6.3 Other travellers visiting and recording their visits to the area included Daniel Defoe (1660), John Wesley (1744), William Marshall (1796) and William Gilpin (1798).

2.6.4 The early nineteenth century saw the rise of the Picturesque movement of painting, closely associated with the increasing popularity of the Romantic Poets including Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey. Exmoor's dramatic coastline, bleak moors and sculptural woodlands was perfect material to be illustrated in words and images. It inspired several poems, including 'Kubla Khan' by Coleridge, and was painted by numerous landscape painters including J.M.W. Turner, Peter De Wint and William Payne.

*But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!*

From *Kubla Khan* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

2.6.5 R.D. Blackmore's novel *Lorna Doone* was published in 1869. Its evocative descriptions of

moorland, coast and ancient villages immediately popularised the Exmoor landscape, and helped to create and sustain the burgeoning tourist industry.

Betwixt them, where the hills fell back, as in a perfect oval, traversed by the winding water, lay a bright green valley, rimmed with sheer black rock, and seeming to have sunken bodily from the bleak rough heights above. It looked as if no frost could enter, neither winds go ruffling: only spring, and hope, and comfort, breath to one another. Even now the rays of sunshine dwelt, and fell back on themselves, whenever the clouds lifted; and the pale blue glimpse of the growing day seemed to find young encouragement.

From *Lorna Doone* by R.D. Blackmore (1869)
(Chapter 15)

2.6.6 Exmoor has a long history of hunting and country sports, which were the inspiration for several well-known sporting artists of the early and Mid-twentieth century, including Cecil Aldin, William Bevan and Alfred Munnings. Their paintings of hunting scenes capture the landscape, people, animals and the atmosphere, and were often sold locally to participants in the hunts.

2.6.7 Literature has continued to celebrate the Exmoor landscape, and encourage people to visit and experience the place for themselves. Two twentieth century examples are 'The Far Distant Oxus' by Katharine Hull and Pamela Whitlock with a forward by Arthur Ransome (1937), and 'Tarka the Otter' by Henry Williamson, which is partially set on Exmoor.

Swimming towards the sunset Tarka went westwards under the towering cliffs and waterfalls in whose ferny sides he liked to rest by day.

From *Tarka the Otter* by Henry Williamson (1927)

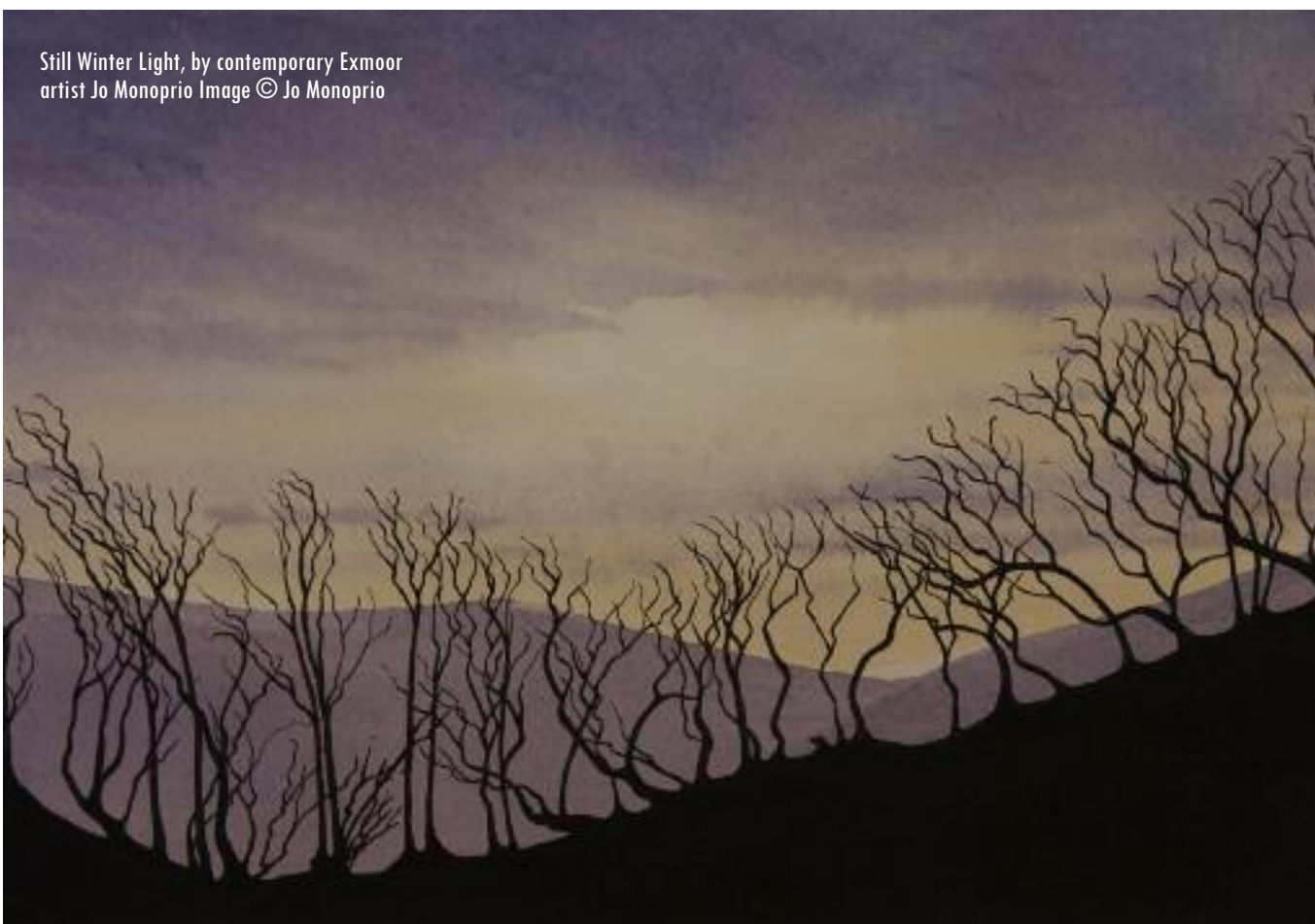
2.6.8 The tradition of using writing to capture and express the Exmoor landscape is still alive and well, as shown by the recent 'Poetry Box' scheme, where notebooks and pencils were left in popular locations around the National Park, with an invitation to people to pen their thoughts on the Exmoor landscape.



Above: Extracts from the Tarr Steps Poetry Box ¹

2.6.9 Exmoor still contains a flourishing community of artists inspired by the Exmoor Landscape, and who continue to celebrate it in their work. Several of these artists, including Jo Monoprio and Rosina Woodthorpe are represented in this Landscape Character Assessment. David Kester Webb sadly died in December 2016, while this Landscape Character Assessment was being produced, but his work continues to inspire. As he put it:

'I hope these images illustrate how one Exmoor boy has been affected by the Exmoor landscape... I lived at Croydon (Felon's Oak) for my first 20 years... I got a scholarship to Somerset College of Art, in 1952. Then I started sketching and drawing anything and everything around me...'



¹ Published in 2016 as *The Exmoor Poetry Boxes* - a harvest of wild words, project leader Christopher Jelley

Landscape and Coastal Designations

2.7 Designations

2.7.1 Exmoor's rich natural and cultural heritage means that it contains numerous sites which are designated for their international, national or local importance. Designated sites and areas within Exmoor are shown in **Maps 3** and **4**, and are summarised in the following tables. Each of the Landscape Character Types Profiles (Part 4) contains

a table showing the designated sites within it. Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires all public organisations to have regard to conserving biodiversity. Section 41 lists habitats and species of principal importance for biodiversity.

Landscape and Nature Conservation Designations

(Definitions taken from the Historic England website, unless stated otherwise)

International Designations	
<p>UK National Park (International Landscape Designation IUCN Category 5)</p>	<p><i>International Landscape Designation IUCN Category 5: Protected Landscape/ Seascape. A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value, and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values. [International Union for the Conservation of Nature].</i></p>
<p>Biosphere Reserve</p>	<p><i>Areas comprising terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems. Each reserve promotes solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. Biosphere reserves have three interrelated zones that aim to fulfil three complementary and mutually reinforcing functions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) The core area(s)...</i> <i>b) The buffer zone...</i> <i>c) The transition area...[UNESCO].</i>
<p>Special Area of Conservation (SAC) 2 sites covering 12,291 ha within Exmoor National Park</p>	<p><i>Strictly protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive... An European network of important high-quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving...listed habitats and species considered to be most in need of conservation at a European Level. [JNCC]</i></p>
<p>International Dark Sky Reserve</p>	<p><i>Land possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights or nocturnal environment that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural, cultural, heritage and/ or public enjoyment [International Dark Sky Association].</i></p>

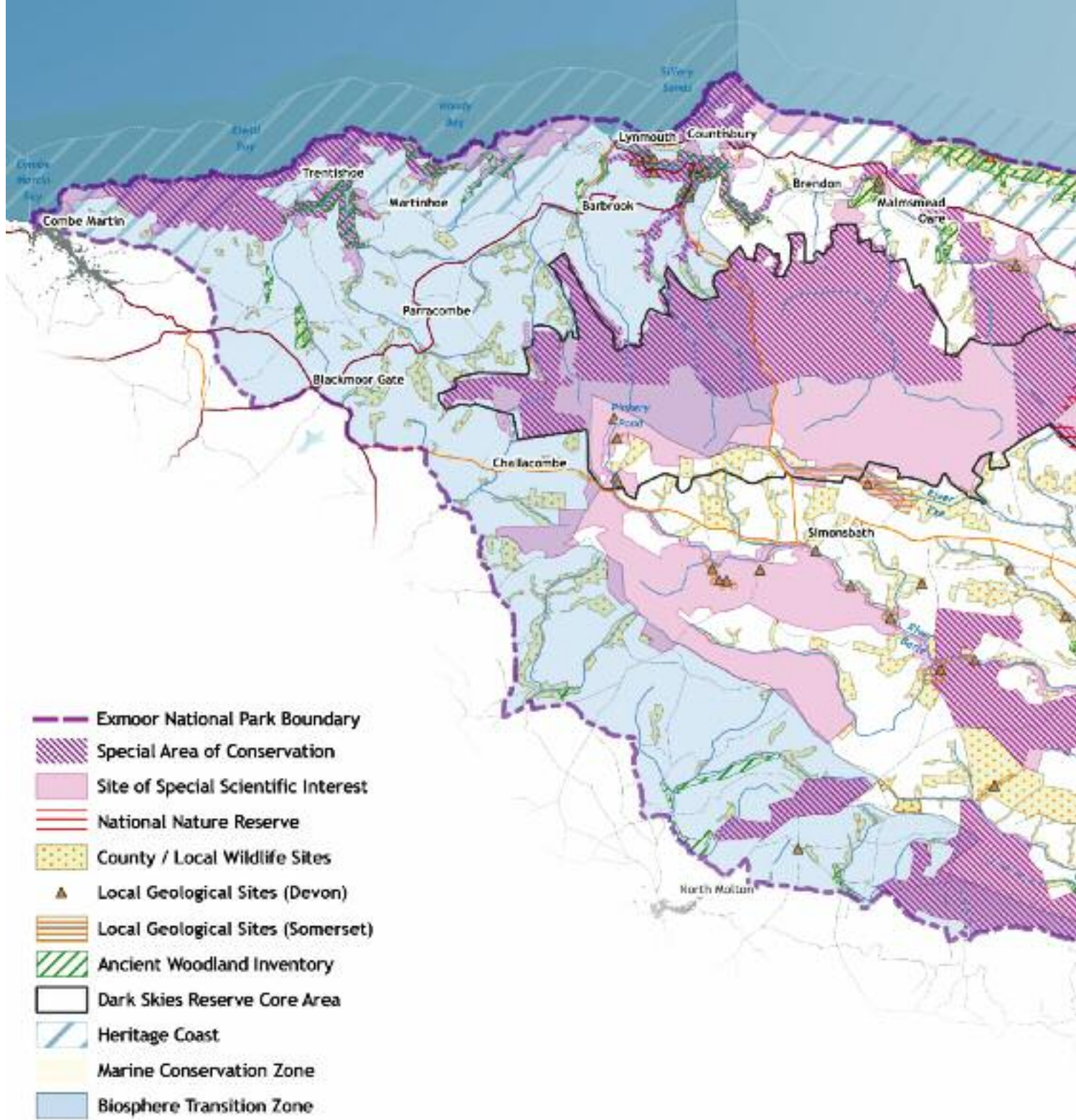
National Designations	
<p>Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) 14 sites, covering 21,940ha</p>	<p><i>A site designated by Natural England as an area of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features.</i></p> <p>Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981</p>
<p>National Nature Reserve (NNR) 3 sites, covering 1,736 ha</p>	<p><i>Examples of some of the most important natural and semi-natural terrestrial and coastal ecosystems in Great Britain. They are managed to conserve their habitats or to provide special opportunities for scientific study. In addition they may be managed to provide public recreation that is compatible with their natural heritage assets.</i></p> <p>Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. [JNCC]</p>
<p>Ancient Woodland 106 sites, covering 3,327 ha</p>	<p><i>An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600AD.</i></p>
<p>Veteran Trees 1657 within Exmoor National Park</p>	<p><i>A tree which, because of its great age is of exceptional value for wildlife, in the landscape or culturally.</i></p>
<p>Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)</p>	<p><i>Areas designated by the Government under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 for the purposes of conserving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) Marine flora or fauna;</i> <i>b) Marine habitats or types of marine habitat;</i> <i>c) Features of geological or geomorphological interest.</i> <p>Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.</p>
<p>Heritage Coast 55.6km within Exmoor National Park</p>	<p><i>A non-statutory definition agreed between Natural England and the relevant maritime local authority to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Conserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty of the coastlines, their marine flora and fauna, and their heritage features;</i> ● <i>Encourage the public's enjoyment, understanding and appreciation;</i> ● <i>Maintain and improve the health of inshore waters affecting heritage coasts and their beaches through appropriate environmental management measures;</i> ● <i>Take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing, and of the economic and social needs of the small communities on these coasts.</i>

Local Designations	
<p>County Wildlife Site (CWS) 512 sites, covering 7,230 ha</p>	<p><i>An area designated as being of local conservation interest. They are defined in local and structure plans and are a material consideration when planning applications are being determined. [JNCC]</i></p>
<p>Local Geological Site (LGS) 87 sites</p>	<p><i>The most important places for geology and geomorphology outside statutorily protected land such as SSSI. Sites are selected...according to their value for education, scientific study, historical significance or aesthetic qualities. [JNCC].</i></p> <p>NOTE: These sites are referred to as Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) in Devon and LGS in Somerset, but have the same status in both counties.</p>
<p>Section 3 Land 22,263 ha within Exmoor National Park, comprising 16,624 ha of moorland and heath; 782 ha of cliff and foreshore; 4,857 ha of woodland</p>	<p><i>Section 3 of the 'Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act 1985 requires National Park Authorities to prepare a map of any areas of 'mountain, moor, heath, woodland, down, cliff or foreshore' where these areas of natural beauty are considered particularly important to conserve. The three main categories of Section 3 Land within Exmoor are defined on the 1990 Section 3 Conservation Map and are identified on the Local Plan Policies Map as: Moor and heath, woodland, and cliff and foreshore.</i></p>



Horner Wood is designated SPA, SSSI, NNR and Ancient Woodland

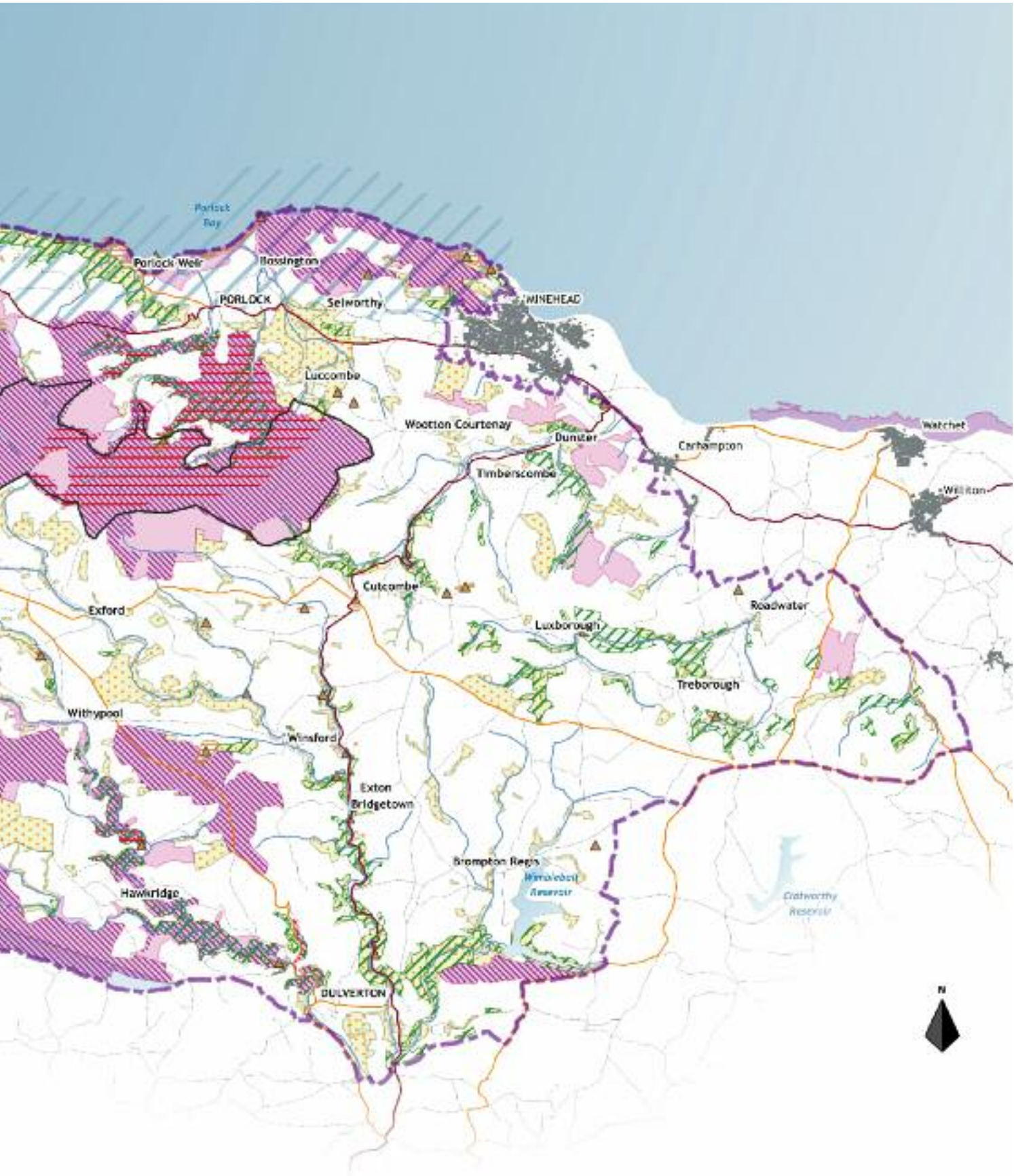
Map 3: Landscape and Nature Conservation Designations



Scale 1: 130,000



© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100024878



Cultural Heritage Designations

(Definitions taken from the Historic England website, unless stated otherwise)

*'Designated Heritage Assets' under the National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

National Designations	
<p>Scheduled Monument* 202 sites, covering 76 ha</p>	<p>Any monument which is for the time being included in the schedule compiled and maintained by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.</p>
<p>Registered Historic Park or Garden* 2 sites covering 415 ha</p>	<p>Sites included on the register of gardens and other land...appearing to English Heritage to be of special interest. Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953.</p>

Local Designations	
<p>Conservation Area* 16 sites covering 235 ha</p>	<p>An area 'of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.</p>
<p>Listed Building* 742 sites</p>	<p>A building which is for the time being included in a list compiled or approved by the Secretary of State under this section, and... Any object or structure fixed to the building; Any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948. Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.</p>
<p>Principal Archaeological Landscape (PAL) 54 sites covering 7246 ha</p>	<p>Archaeological landscapes which exist as entities beyond the sum or their individual elements...Their designation allows areas to be recognised for their historic nature, regardless of their legal status. [Exmoor National Park Authority]</p>
<p>Locally-defined heritage assets on the Exmoor Historic Environment Record (HER) 11,222 sites</p>	<p>Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.</p>

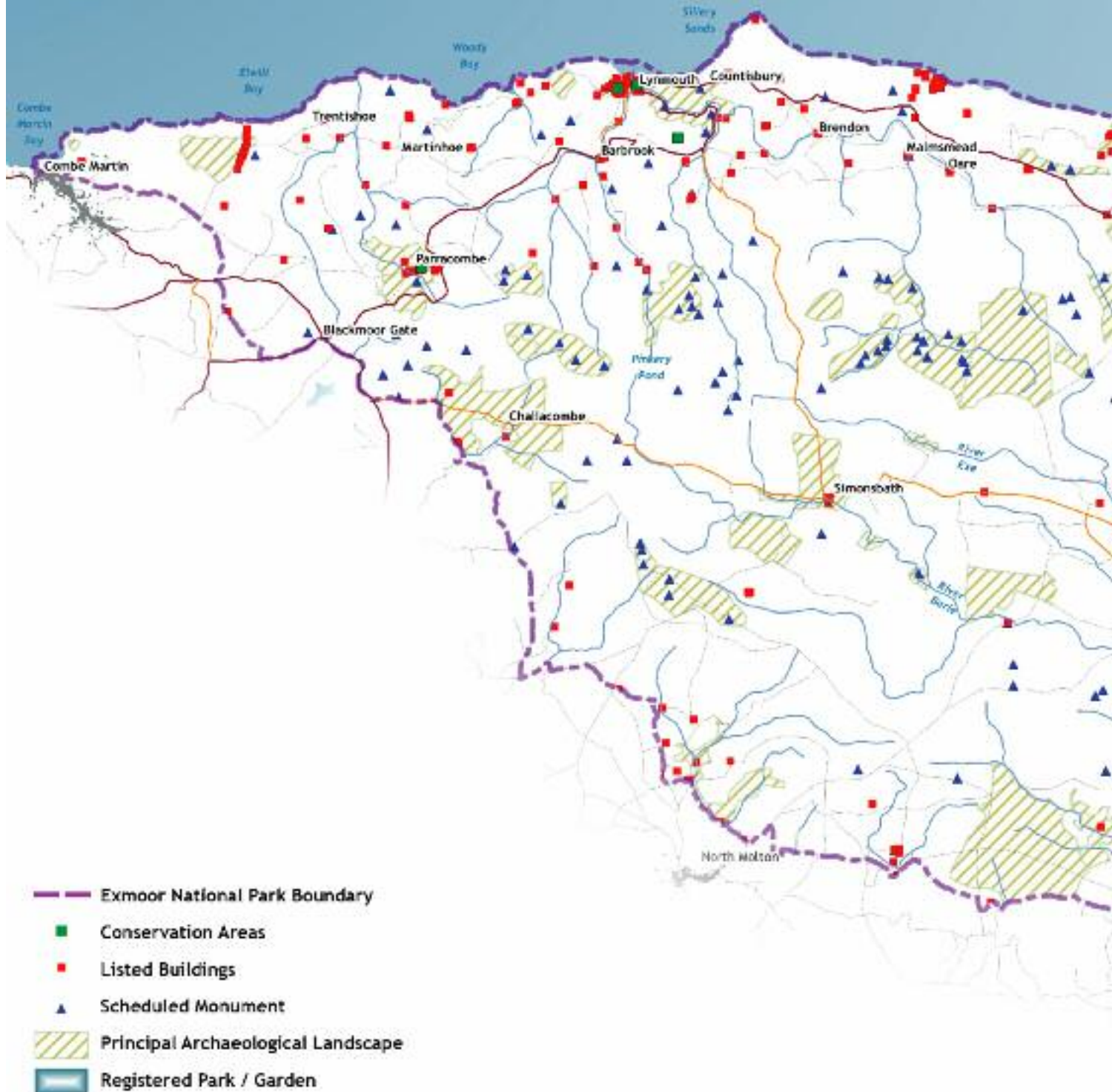


Dunster is designated a Conservation Area and contains many listed buildings. Dunster Castle and Yarn Market are Scheduled Monuments, and Dunster Castle is set within a Registered Historic Park

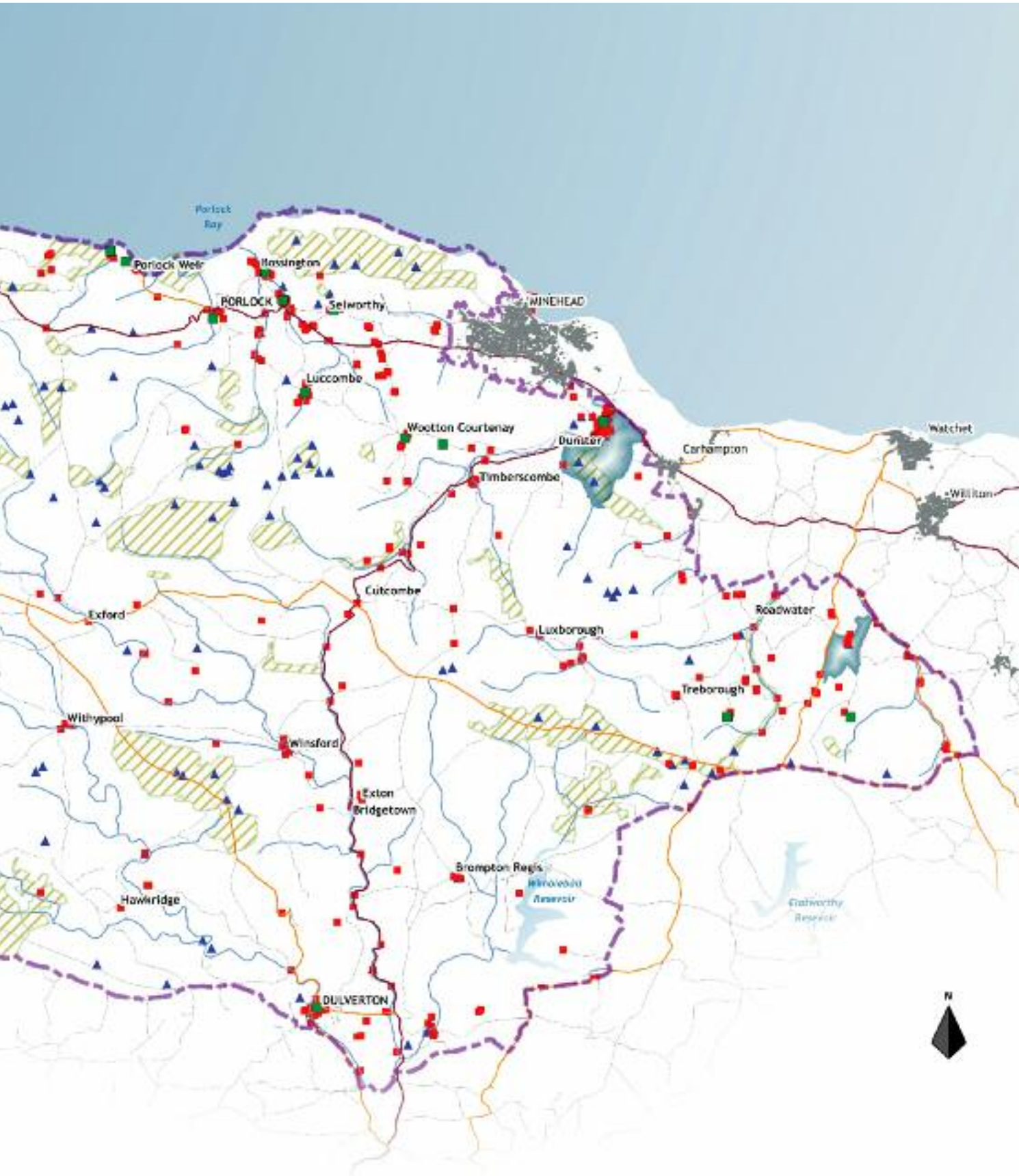


The village of Exford contains numerous sites recorded on the Exmoor National Park Historic Environment Record, including buildings, signposts, bridges, field systems and lime kilns. The bridge and church are also listed buildings. In addition to these designated sites, the village is also a focus for cultural activities, including traditional maypole dancing

Map 4: Cultural Heritage Designations



© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100024878



2.8 Exmoor’s Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

2.8.1 Exmoor’s natural capital includes the elements of nature that produce value and benefits (directly and indirectly) to people, such as the stock of woodlands, rivers, land, and sea¹, and the inherent scenic beauty of the landscape. These elements, together with others such as reservoirs, fields, hedgerows and access land, have the potential to provide Exmoor’s ecosystem services.

These are the benefits gained by people, both within Exmoor and beyond, from the natural environment. For example, peatland and woodland have the capacity to slow the passage of water, which in turn has the potential to reduce flooding. This is a characteristic of the ecosystem. If the potential to prevent flooding is considered a benefit (or a ‘value’) to people, then this ecosystem characteristic is an ecosystem service.²

Diagram showing how the concept of ecosystem services is categorised:



¹ Natural Capital Committee (2013) *The First State of Natural Capital: Towards a framework for measurement and valuation* Available at: www.naturalcapitalcommittee.org/category/publications/

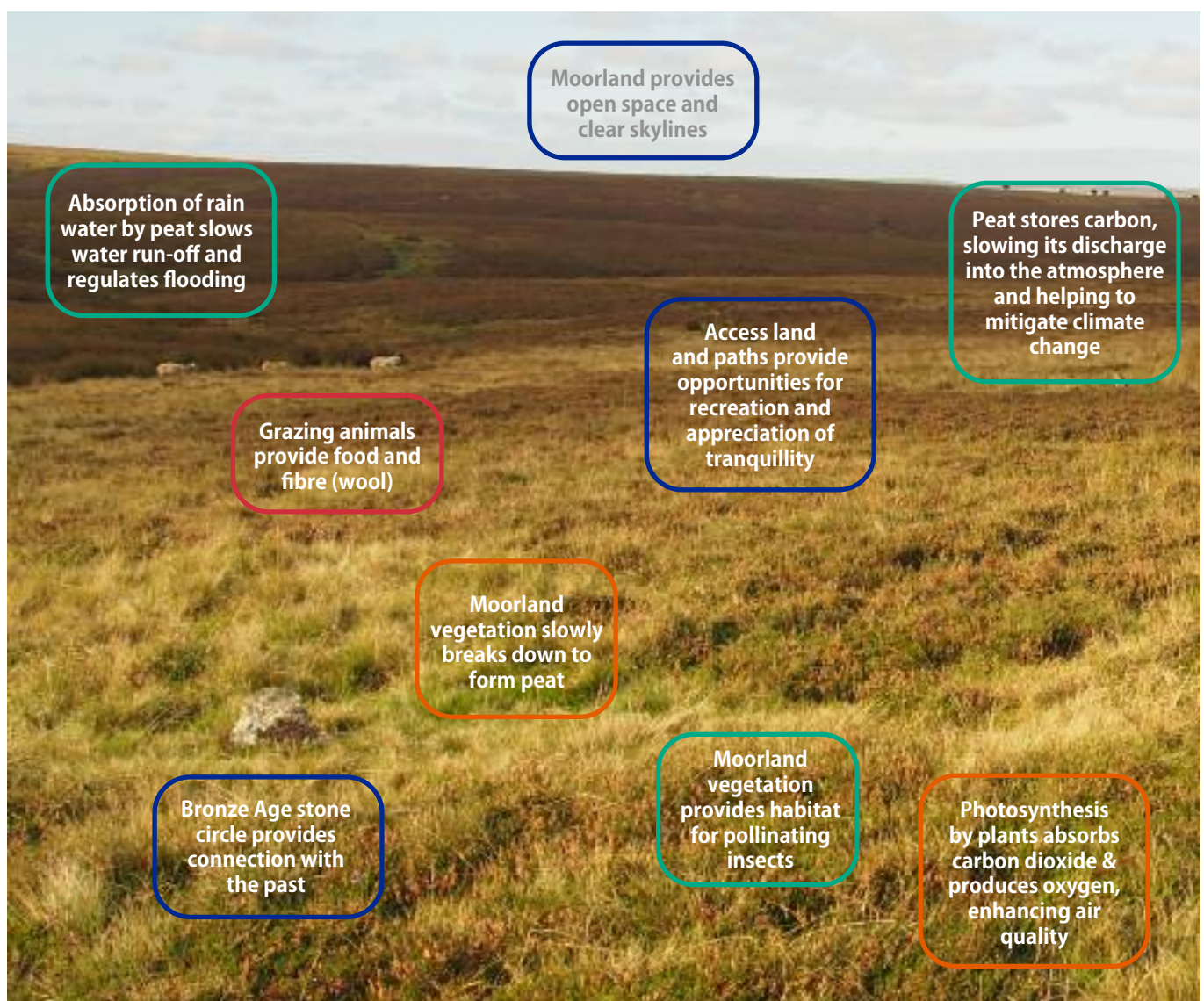
² UK National Ecosystem Assessment (2011) *The UK National Ecosystem Assessment: Synthesis of the Key Findings*. UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge.

2.8.2 The concept of ecosystem services forms an important part of the ecosystem approach. There are three key aspects of the ecosystem approach: involving people; understanding how nature works; and valuing nature's services. Management decisions affecting ecosystems and natural capital will impact on service provision. Therefore ecosystems and natural capital need to be considered in decision making in order for them to provide benefits to people.³

2.8.3 The Exmoor Landscape Character Assessment helps to achieve this approach through its analysis of the component parts of the landscape and the ecosystems services which they provide. It also provides a spatial framework for future more detailed considerations of Exmoor's natural capital and its associated ecosystems services.

2.8.4 The following illustrations show different examples of Exmoor's natural capital and the ecosystems services which they provide.

Examples of ecosystem services provided by Exmoor's moorland:



Key: Cultural Services Provisioning Services Regulating Services Supporting Services

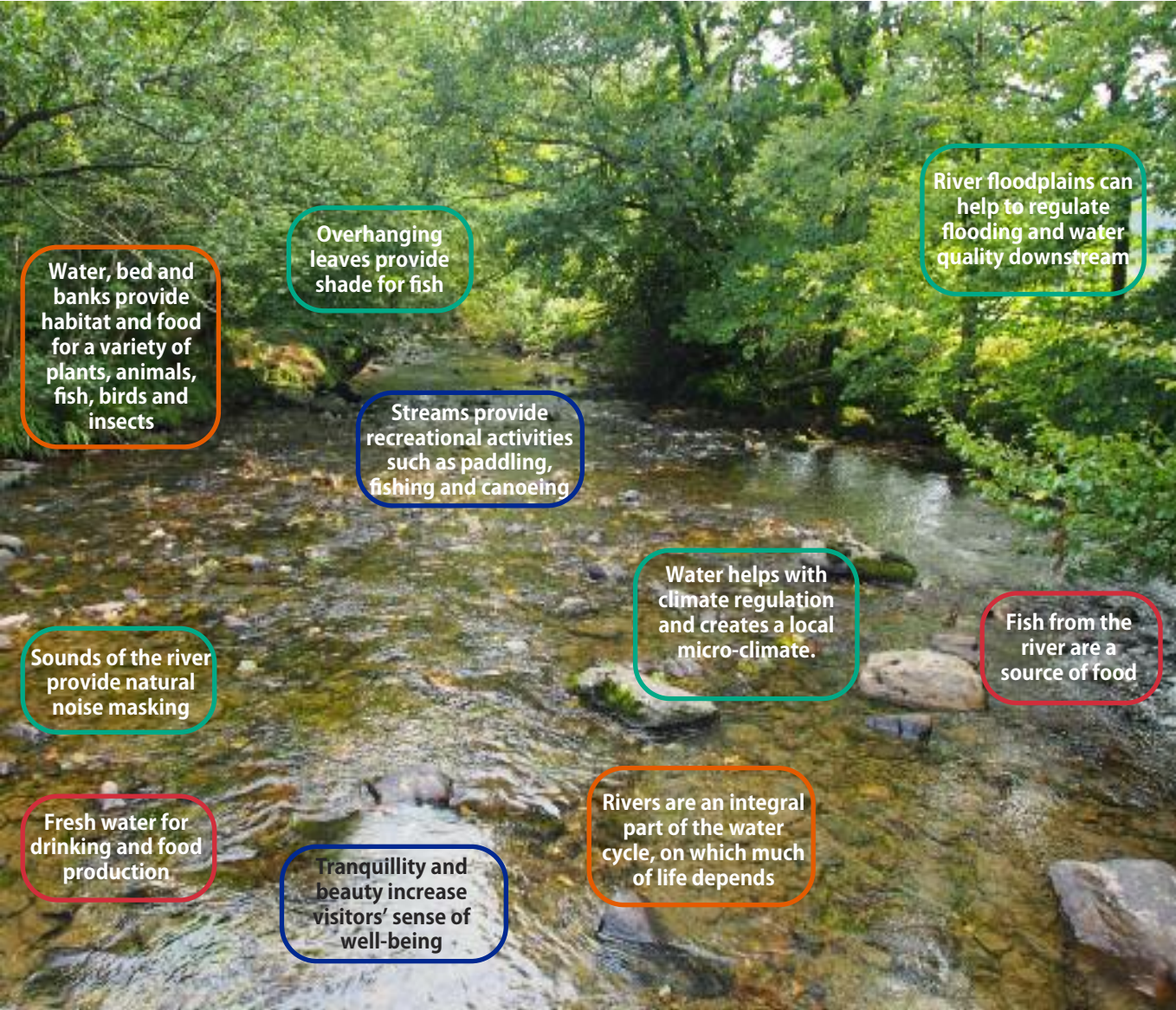
³ Porter, J., Jagota, L., Brookes, J., Mahony, P., Howard, B., Waters, R., Hunt, D. (2014) *Ecosystem Approach Handbook*. Countryside, Manchester

Examples of ecosystem services provided by Exmoor's woodland:



Key: Cultural Services Provisioning Services Regulating Services Supporting Services

Examples of ecosystem services provided by Exmoor’s rivers and streams:



Key: Cultural Services Provisioning Services Regulating Services Supporting Services

Landscape Issues: Forces for Change

2.9 Forces for Change on the Exmoor Landscape

2.9.1 The preceding sections have outlined how the Exmoor landscape has been shaped by natural and human processes to create the features which we see today. This process is continuing, as landscapes are not static. Rather they are dynamic, and under constant pressure from forces both natural and man-made. The challenge is to identify ways in which these changes can be accommodated in a way which enhances, rather than damages, the landscapes of Exmoor National Park. Some changes can be managed through the planning system or mitigated through partnership working and targeted use of resources.

2.9.2 This section identifies generic forces for change which are acting on Exmoor's landscapes at the moment, and which are likely to affect them in the foreseeable future. They include natural processes and climate change; changing woodland and forestry management; changing farming and land management; tourism and recreation-led change; development-led change, and changes outside the National Park which impact on its setting. The Landscape Character Type Profiles (Part 4) identify specific landscape issues that exert forces for change on each of the nine Landscape Character Types within the National Park, and provide management and planning recommendations to address them.

2.9.3 Many of the changes affecting Exmoor's landscapes are small scale and incremental, and sometimes not readily perceived until a comparison with older pictures shows the cumulative extent of change. Other changes are sudden, such as a new communications mast or building. Again, whilst one new development may not be particularly obvious, the cumulative impacts of several such developments can add up to significant landscape change. Whilst most changes

are visual, others may affect our perceptions of landscape through changes in sounds or smell. Farming practices, machinery, recreational activities and transport may all lead to changes in the perceptual qualities of landscape.

2.9.4 It is also important to note that some of the greatest landscape changes take place on private land, away from roads and footpaths, and may therefore not be readily apparent. These 'hidden changes' include intensification of management of land for game shooting, forestry/woodland management (including forestry tracks), neglect of traditional field boundaries on farmland, and a lack of traditional management (for example ceasing to lay hedges).

2.9.5 As explained in the previous section, there is an increasing recognition of the role of habitats in delivering multiple benefits (for example natural flood management, carbon sequestration etc.). This in turn creates a debate about the future of our landscapes and what they might look like should natural processes be allowed to take place with differing levels of active management.

2.9.6 Not all changes currently happening in the Exmoor landscape are negative. Across the National Park there are examples of beneficial change, many as a result of land management grants or other initiatives and actions. Examples include better controlled grazing; introduction of cattle to moorland with abundant purple moor grass (molinia); reduction of soil erosion; hedge management (before recent declines in funding) and control of invasive species. Exmoor National Park Authority has also instigated a number of projects, such as the enhancement of Porlock Marsh and the Valley of Rocks, which have had positive impacts on the landscape.

Opposite: The cumulative impacts of incremental change over 60 years. The top photo shows the Hoar Oak Valley in the 1950s, and the bottom photo shows the same view in 2016. In this time the standing stone has fallen, heather vegetation in the foreground has been replaced with grass, the extent of valley-side bracken and gorse is greater, the thorn tree has gone, and fencing has been introduced into the moorland landscape.



Natural Processes and Climate Change

- **Erosion by wind, water and waves** gradually changing the shape of the landscape and coast. Although the coastal rocks are relatively hard and slow to erode, there is a risk of coastal squeeze, resulting in a loss of beaches, foreshore and coastal woodland habitats. Coastal heritage features are vulnerable to damage from storms and high tides.
- Infrequent **dramatic events** such as floods, and the coastal breach at Porlock, resulting in sudden landscape change.
- **Tree diseases** (for example phytophthora ramorum and ash dieback) affecting the tree species present. Responsive felling (for example of infected larch) also affects the appearance of the landscape.
- Other **biological pests and diseases**, such as heather beetle and grey squirrel, affecting vegetation growth, establishment and regeneration, often over large areas.
- **Invasive species** such as rhododendron and Japanese knotweed, which out-compete native vegetation, altering woodland and riverside habitats. Localised infestations of American signal crayfish potentially damage river banks and fish stocks.
- Regeneration of woodland and scrub on areas which are no longer managed or grazed, resulting in the encroachment of trees onto areas which were previously moorland.
- **Raised levels of CO₂** potentially leading to increased plant growth rates. A further cause for concern is the potential impact of **atmospheric nitrogen deposition**, which acts like a fertilizer and enriches the soil. In moorland areas this could allow species such as purple moor grass (molinia) to out-compete heather.
- **Climate change** is likely to lead to exacerbation of these processes, including:
- **Greater frequency and intensity of storm events** likely to increase flood risk, soil erosion, path erosion and damage to trees by strong winds.
- **Rising sea levels**, resulting in increased rates of coastal erosion and coastal flooding.
- **Drier summers** increasing risk of heathland fires and affecting drought-intolerant species.
- **Warmer air temperatures** are likely to provide favourable conditions for a variety of pests and diseases.
- **Changes to biodiversity** as a result of climatic changes resulting in changes to habitats, which in turn impacts on the landscape.
- **Changes in tree species composition** may result in changes in the character of upland oakwoods to include more beech and sycamore.

Changing Woodland and Forestry Management

- **Decline in traditional woodland management** practices such as coppicing, resulting in a lack of age diversity and a lack of natural regeneration within deciduous woodland trees.
- **Decline in new woodland planting** contributing to reduced age diversity.
- **Narrow age structure of conifer plantations reaching maturity**, resulting in landscape change (positive or negative) as trees are felled and replaced with heathland/ replanted conifers/ replanted broadleaf trees.
- **Forestry tracks** financial incentives for provision of tracks for forestry management has potential to increase access, flooding and erosion due to water run-off and/ or overuse by vehicles.
- **Deer and grey squirrels** damaging young trees, shrubs and ground flora, preventing woodland regeneration and establishment, and affecting species composition.
- **Loss of views** from paths and viewpoints, as a result of dense/ tall tree cover following decline in management.
- Conventional management of large (and often poorly-managed) felling coupes is resulting in **cycles of felling and replanting** which has a landscape impact (positive and negative).



Changing Farming and Land Management

- **Changes to land management and grant incentives** (such as Higher Level Stewardship Scheme) affecting grazing regimes and moorland and farmland management. Recent years have seen a reduction in the intensity of grazing in most upland areas, along with a reduction in swaling, resulting in regeneration of former heath by bracken, gorse and trees. Future upland land management is likely to be significantly affected by changes to agricultural grant schemes.
- **Changing appearance of the moorlands** due to loss of purple heather to bracken, gorse and purple moor grass (molinia), and loss of species which the heather supports.
- **Loss of views**, with roadside gorse affecting visibility from roads and viewpoints.
- **Damage to buried archaeology and earthworks** due to changes to vegetation. Tree roots damage underground features, and bracken rhizomes attack buried archaeology both physically and chemically.
- **Changes to farming structures**, including divisions of family farms and the amalgamation of farm holdings, which affects the way that land is managed. Local knowledge of the land and traditional farming methods may be lost if they are not passed on between generations.
- **Farm diversification**, for example holiday accommodation, and equestrian businesses and activities, can change the character of the rural landscape.
- **Construction of larger agricultural sheds** and associated infrastructure, required as a result of changing agricultural practices (overwintering of stock) and intensification of methods.
- **Loss of landscape pattern** may occur if field boundaries decline and cease to be such a dominant feature in the landscape.
- **Unintended damage to banks** alongside lanes, gateways and bridge parapets as a result of use by increasingly large vehicles (including farm machinery).
- **Plastic / textile** used as wrapping on silage and for crop cover can appear very prominent and has potential to lead to increased surface water run off.
- **Traditional stone banks, walls and hedgebanks** require time-consuming and costly maintenance and management, and also traditional skills. Without adequate grants or craftsmanship skills, these prominent features risk further disrepair and inappropriate repair to keep them stock proof.
- **Loss of traditional rural buildings** through neglect or lack of current use, with conversion to other uses being sought.
- **Shooting** continues to be an active land use, requiring tracks, game crop cover, feeders and holding-pens. The impacts can be cumulative, but are often sited away from roads and public rights of way, so are not immediately apparent. Striped or geometric game crops can be particularly noticeable.
- **Catchment-based schemes to help ameliorate water management to reduce and slow downstream flooding.** Such land management initiatives can result in landscape changes, including moorland drain blocking, small scale dam construction, riverside woodland planting, and earth bunding to help improve the floodplain storage.
- **Loss of estate character** through changes in ownership and management and the cost and neglect of landscape features such as park pales, stone faced banks, historic gates and carriage drives.
- **Equestrian and smallholding** land uses potentially increasing, particularly in small landholdings, resulting in incremental changes (such as subdivision of fields and construction of dressage arenas) which may lead to cumulative impacts.

Tourism and Recreation-Led Change

- **Commercial and tourism developments** affecting the rural character of the landscape, for example through signage, ornamental type planting, increased numbers of cars in specific areas and additional car parking provision. New trends for **glamping and motor home sites** could add intrusive elements into the landscape unless they are very carefully designed and sited.
- **Visitor pressure** at popular sites, resulting in physical deterioration such as path erosion, and requiring increased management for example litter, dog mess etc.
- **Large-scale events** are relatively new to Exmoor, and create additional challenges in terms of their impacts.
- **Visitor facilities** (car parks, toilet blocks, paths, interpretation boards, signposts etc.) can create a more managed landscape with more of a **'country park' character** unless they are carefully designed.
- **Car park provision in prominent moorland areas** (e.g. Brendon Common) allows access to the moorland views for those who cannot walk, but also affects the character of the landscape and impact on the sense of tranquillity, wildness and remoteness. This is a particular issue during hunting events, when informal parking also takes place along roads.
- **Conversion of former agricultural buildings** into recreational use (e.g. camping barns).
- **Increased scale of residential growth**, particularly in settlements outside the National Park, may increase visitor numbers.
- **Potential reinstatement of Lynton and Barnstaple railway** and associated infrastructure.

Changes outside Exmoor National Park which impact on its setting

- **New development** including development in surrounding towns and villages, and potential provision of **road schemes** may impact on views from the National Park.
- **Renewable energy projects** (both existing and potential) impacting on views over land outside the National Park which forms its setting (e.g. Fullabrook windfarm to the west, and Batsworthy Cross windfarm to the south). Renewable energy projects include windfarms which introduce large and dynamic structures into the landscape; solar farms which appear as extensive dark and reflective areas, particularly when viewed from above (for example in views from the B3227 towards Molland and Anstey Commons), and potential tidal or wind developments in the Bristol Channel which will affect the seascape and its associated character and views.
- **Communications masts** are prominent features on horizons when seen from parts of the National Park (for example Brendon Hill Radio Station; Washford Transmitting Station).
- **Light pollution** from surrounding areas (including the lights of the South Wales coast) reduces the outstanding quality of dark night skies, particularly around the peripheries of the National Park.
- **Plastic crop covers** reflect light and are therefore noticeable in views on a temporary basis.



Lights of South Wales seen across the Bristol Channel from Dunkery Hill at dusk



Batsworthy wind farm seen on the horizon from Haddon Hill



Grown-out hazel coppice in Horner Wood



Dam constructed through the Exmoor Mires Project

Development-led Change

- **New housing** (particularly local needs housing) needs to be provided and integrated into the existing settlement patterns and surrounding landscapes, using locally-appropriate materials and features.
- **Urbanisation along highway corridors**, creating cumulative effect resulting from (for example) increased signage, road markings, kerbs and traffic calming measures. This can be a particular issue along main roads and around and within villages. Exmoor still has many **traditional signposts** which are a locally-distinctive feature, but some are in a poor state of repair.
- **Telecommunications masts** can become prominent features and damage Exmoor's characteristic smooth skylines if they are poorly sited, and their construction needs to be balanced against the economic and social need.
- **New agricultural buildings:** a need to enable for provision of more and increasingly larger scale agricultural buildings to meet current farming practices/ methods, often in more elevated and prominent locations. The increased need for associated lighting can also impact on Exmoor's dark night skies if lighting and buildings are not well designed and managed.
- **New agricultural workers dwellings:** a need to enable provision of new agricultural dwellings where agricultural justification is met with increased pressure for additional floor space, associated ancillary structures and access/ servicing areas
- **Renewable energy schemes** including hydro-electricity, tidal power, wind power and solar power, and their associated infrastructure, can all impact on landscapes and views, particularly where they break horizons, are visible from above, or introduce built elements into an otherwise undeveloped landscape.
- **Property boundary treatments** can be insensitive and look out of character, potentially creating urbanising influences in the rural landscape, for example conifer hedging, flat-topped walls and brick gateways.
- **Replacement PVCu windows and doors** can affect the character and appearance of traditional buildings, although more sympathetic products are becoming available.