

EXMOOR'S ANCIENT ROUTEWAYS: HISTORY,
ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC LANDSCAPE
ANALYSIS

Exmoor Mires Project

PROJECT REPORT

By Hazel Riley



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Hazel Riley BA (Hons), AIFA, FSA
Consultant in Landscape History, Management and Conservation Grazing
The Furley Herd of Dexter Cattle
New House Cottage
Furley
Axminster
Devon
EX13 7TR
01404 881330
hazelfurleydexter@btinternet.com

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ABBREVIATIONS

DRO Devon Record Office, Exeter
EH English Heritage
EMP Exmoor Mires Project
ENPA Exmoor National Park Authority
HE Historic England
NDRO North Devon Record Office
NMP National Mapping Programme
SRO Somerset Record Office, Taunton

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ABSTRACT

This study has looked at the history and archaeology of Exmoor's ancient routeways. A GIS dataset has been developed which shows the routeways in relation to Exmoor's historic landscape. The subsequent analysis of this has shown that the routeways may well have their origins in the post-Roman or early medieval periods as droveways for livestock moving across the landscape for summer grazing on Exmoor. In the later medieval and post medieval periods, travellers on horseback and packhorse carriers used the routes across the Royal Forest. An exceptional set of packhorse equipment from an Exmoor farm has been preserved at Torquay Museum.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

This study was commissioned by the Exmoor Mires Project, on behalf of the Exmoor National Park Authority. The overall aim of the study is to investigate the evidence for past communications routes in the former Royal Forest and its environs, and to develop an interpretation of their development and the factors driving this (ENPA 2014, 3.1).

The study area

The study is focused on the area of the former Royal Forest of Exmoor but also includes the commons and settlements which surround it (ENPA 2014, 2.2). The southern and western boundaries follow the ENPA boundary from Brushford to Blackmoor Gate. It runs NE roughly along the A39 to Lynton and Lynmouth, then deviates to the north of this to include Porlock. The study area boundary runs SE through West Luccombe, Luccombe and Wootton Courtenay to Timberscombe, then follows the A396 south to the bridge over the River Exe at Warmore Wood (Fig 1).

Methodology

The project brief set out eight questions and issues to be addressed:

How is the evidence for past communications routes distributed?

What is the range of extent and morphology of the field evidence?

How does the evidence relate to other types of archaeological evidence?

How does the evidence relate to the boundary of the Royal Forest at different stages of its development?

How does the evidence relate to local topography?

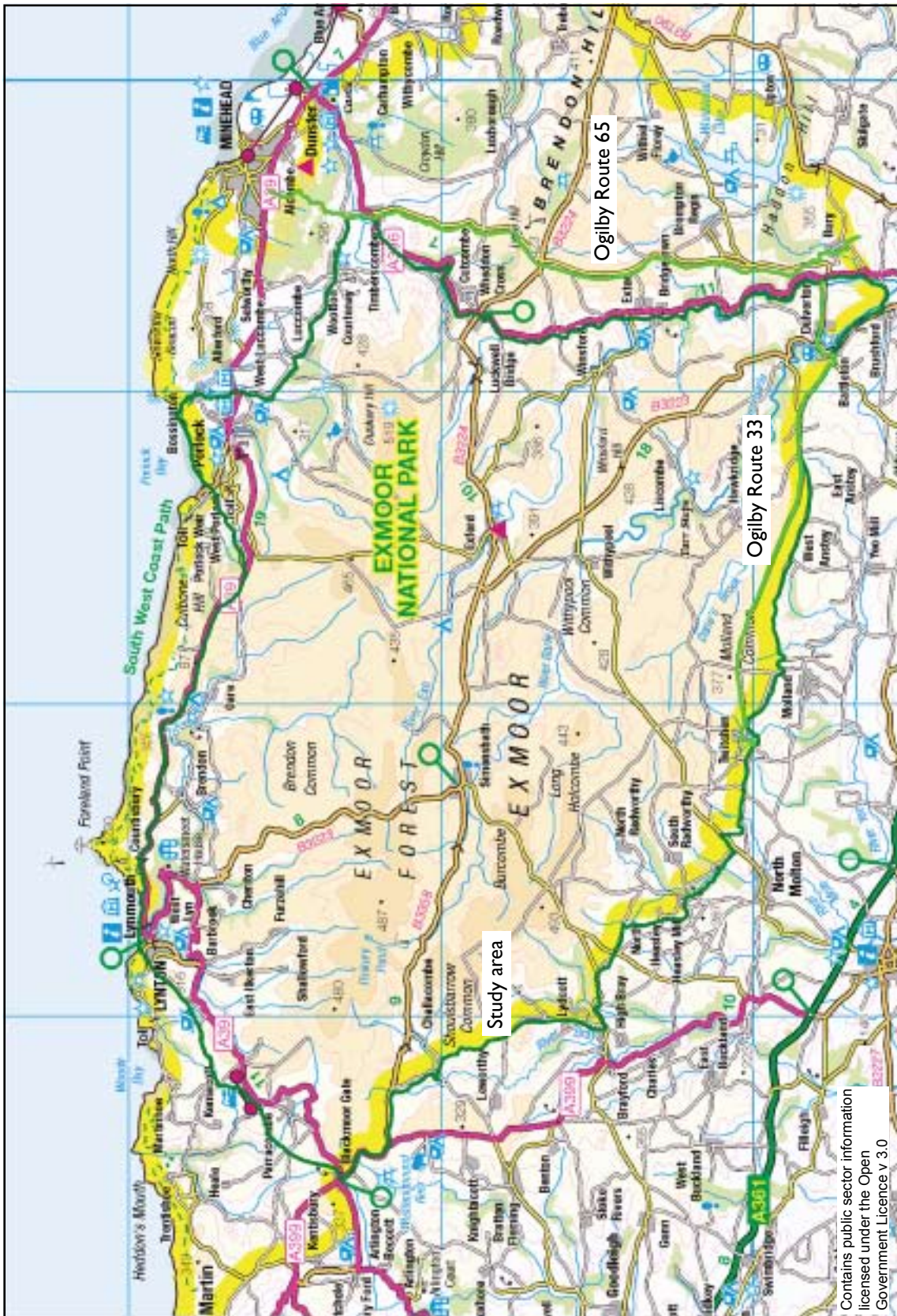
How does the evidence relate to the wider region surrounding Exmoor?

What is the evidence for chronology?

How do relict routeways relate to modern communications routes?

(ENPA 2014, 3.1)

Data from the Exmoor HER, Lidar images, historical and documentary research, together with a programme of rapid field assessment and investigation has been used to address these questions. The study was carried out in two stages (ENPA 2014, 4.0). Stage 1, data collection, collated data from a variety of sources (listed below). The end result of Stage 1 was a summary report, including a statement of potential and recommendations for Stage 2 which included suggested areas for rapid field assessment and investigation (Riley 2014).



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Fig 1 Study area and parts of Ogilby's Routes 33 and 65

At the heart of the project is a GIS dataset, created on MapInfo 12.0 and 12.5, and this report is structured around interpretative maps of the development of Exmoor's ancient routeways, based on this dataset (Figs 35,39,45,46,49,57,60,76,94).

Sources consulted

Exmoor HER

Full text records and the GIS polygons/point data for records within the study area searched on the following key words:

DROVE ROAD

HOLLOW WAY

PACKHORSE ROAD

TRACKWAY

Exmoor Mire Project mapping

Mapping grade GPS survey data and text records for sites discovered during Exmoor Mire Project fieldwork.

Lidar data

ENPA supplied Lidar data for the former Royal Forest and surrounding moorlands.

Historic maps

Saxton's County Map of Devon

Saxton's County Map of Somerset

Ogilby's Road Maps of England and Wales from Ogilby's Britannia 1675

Donn's County Map of Devon 1765

Day and Master's County Map of Somerset 1782

Exmoor Inclosure Final Award of the Commissioners 1818 (SRO Q\Rde 140)

Greenwood's County Map of Somerset 1822

Greenwood's County Map of Devon 1827

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition c 1890

Project GIS

The following historic maps have been registered on the Project GIS:

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition c 1890

Greenwood's County Map of Devon 1827

Greenwood's County Map of Somerset 1822

Exmoor Inclosure Final Award of the Commissioners 1818 (SRO Q\Rde 140)

Day and Master's County Map of Somerset 1782

Donn's County Map of Devon could not be registered satisfactorily

A spreadsheet of the records for Exmoor's ancient routeways based on the Exmoor HER and the Exmoor Mire Project has been compiled. This contains information grouped under the following headings:

HER NUMBER

NGR

PARISH

EVIDENCE

EXTANT
FORM
SIZE (if measured on ground)
MAPPING
ASSOCIATIONS
INTERPRETATION
DATE
FURTHER WORK

A total of 203 (all duplicated accounted for in this total) records for hollow ways, packhorse ways and tracks have been collated in this spreadsheet. The data is mapped onto the Project GIS and each HER or EMP record now has this information associated with it.

The layers of historic mapping, dating from the late 18th to the late 19th centuries, allow a rapid assessment of the antiquity of each record. In particular, the registering of the 1818 Inclosure Map allows the extant routeways recorded in the former Royal Forest to be easily visualised against the roads and bridleways described in the Inclosure Award for Exmoor Forest.

Rapid field assessment and investigation

The data collection process described above allowed the selection of eight areas for rapid field assessment and investigation. Individual sites were chosen which have clear indications of relationships with other historic landscape features, with the aim of developing a clearer chronology for Exmoor's routeways (Fig 2).

Southern Commons: commons, relict field systems, Royal Forest courts

Hawkridge Common

Parsonage Down

Hawkridge Plain

Willingford

Molland Common

East Anstey Common

Ashway Side

Horner Wood and Stoke Pero: coast, woodland, charcoal burning, deserted medieval settlement

Wilmersham Common

Stoke Pero

Horner Wood

Ley Hill

Upper Exe and Quarne valleys: antiquity of names, shrunken settlement, relict field system

Holloway Lane

Kitnor Heath

Staddon Hill

Bye Common

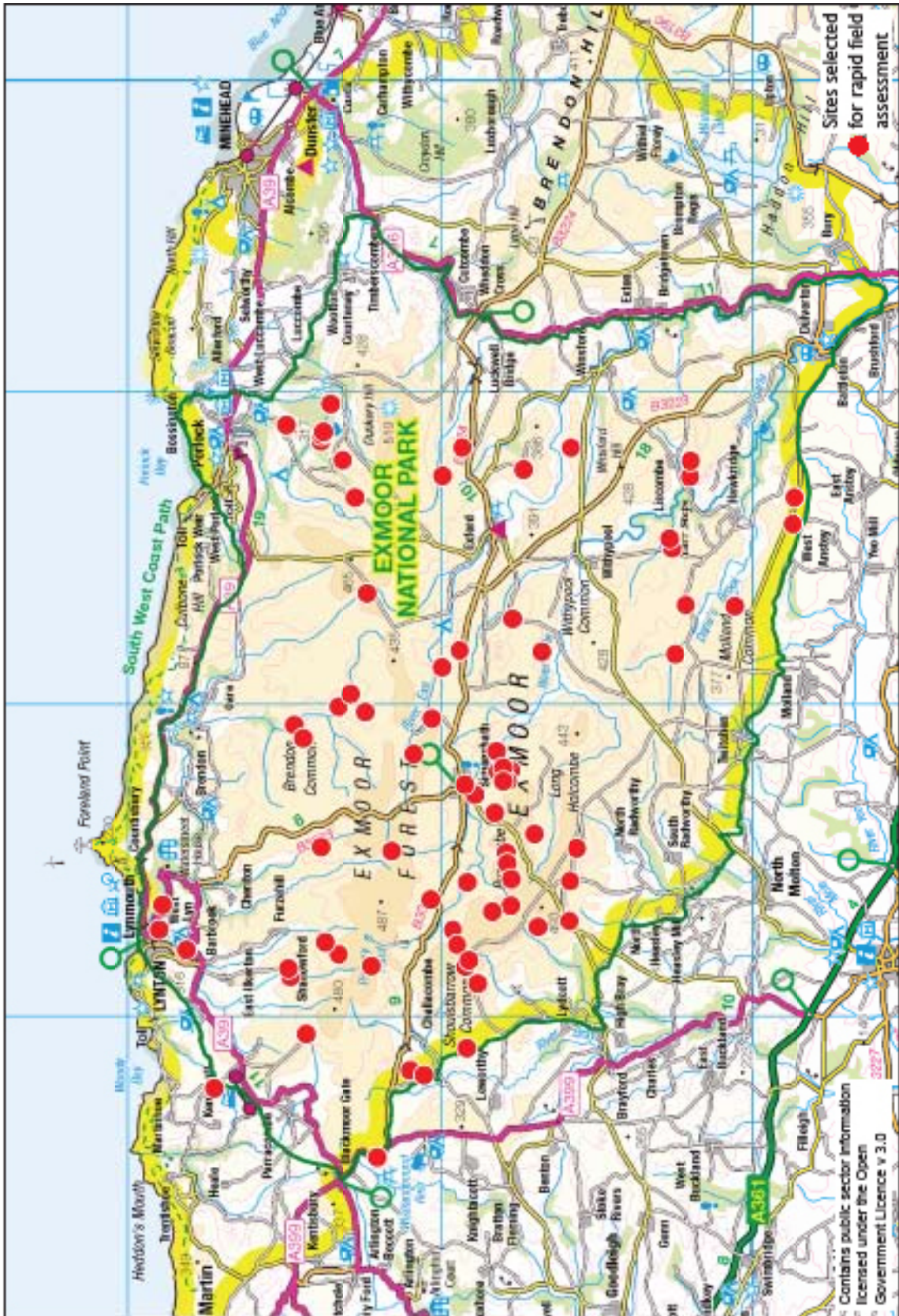


Fig 2 Sites selected for rapid field assessment

Former Royal Forest NE: excavation evidence for route on 18th C map, settlement contraction, use of boundary of ring fenced holding for access, industry, access to commons, routes to and across Royal Forest

Friendship Farm

Barton Town

Wallover Down

Mole's Chamber N and NE

Former Royal Forest SW: routes converging at Simonsbath, industry, potential early routes

Five Barrows

Fyldon Common

Burcombe

Simonsbath

Former Royal Forest NW: industry with documentary evidence, excavation evidence for route with documentary evidence, routes across commons, route along Royal Forest boundary

Parracombe public quarry

Martinhoe Common

West Lyn

Shallowford and Ilkerton Ridge

Saddlegate and Woodbarrow

Former Royal Forest E: Forest access point, boundary marker, Royal Forest court, prehistoric and early medieval settlements, routes across Forest, turbary

Lanacre

Newlands

Redstone Hill

Alderman's Barrow

Flexbarrow

Halscombe

Exe Head

Former Royal Forest N: prehistoric landscapes, deserted medieval and post-medieval settlement

Lanacombe

Badgworthy

Toms Hill

Pinford

Project archive

The project archive containing digital photographs and GIS files is held at the Exmoor HER.

ANCIENT ROUTEWAYS IN BRITAIN

Summary of research in Britain

Britain's Old Ways have provided the inspiration for poets, philosophers, naturalists and cultural historians. The antiquity of these ways has been assumed: the poet Edward Thomas wrote of 'indelible old roads', 'worn by hoofs and the naked feet and the trailing staves of long-dead generations'. The paths have been associated with ghosts and the dead, a way back into the past. The naturalist W H Hudson walked the old ways with the thought that they might lead him to 'slip back out of this modern world' and naturalist Richard Jeffries described how he felt reaching a Bronze Age barrow in Gloucestershire: 'as if I could look back and feel *then*; the sunshine of *then*, and their life' (quoted in Macfarlane 2013, 25, 21-22).

More prosaic consideration of Britain's ancient routeways has been in the form of the study of abandoned roads, tracks and paths with the help of maps, documentary evidence, and, occasionally, fieldwork. Addison's *The Old Roads of England* considered the country's road network from ancient tracks via Roman roads and green lanes to coaching routes (Addison 1980). The topic has been approached chronologically: Roman roads in Britain had an authoritative survey in the mid- 20th century (Margary 1955); the medieval road system has been studied in some detail with the aid of documentary and map evidence (Hindle 1976; 1998), and the history of turnpike roads is well documented (Albert 1972; Wright G N 1992; www.turnpikes.org.uk). The topic has also been approached thematically with a particular emphasis on the drovers and their routes from highland Britain to the livestock markets in southeast England, particularly London. Bonser's *The Drovers* (1970) and Moore-Colyer's *Welsh Cattle Drovers* (1975; 2002) provided the historical framework for regional studies of the drove roads of Wales, Scotland, Northumberland and Hampshire which are firmly based in the analysis of the historic landscape (Godwin and Toulson 1978; Haldane 2008; Roberts *et al* 2010; Kingston 1992).

Several regional or local studies have considered ancient routeways, for example in Wessex (Timperley and Brill 1969; Cochrane 1969), while drawing heavily on his work on Anglo-Saxon charters and using OS maps, Grundy identified numerous 'ancient highways' in south west England (Grundy 1937; 1939; 1941). An important regional study in the context of this project looked at trade and communications in North Derbyshire and South Yorkshire (Hey 1980). This work examined the field evidence, place name evidence, maps and documents to present a detailed account of the development of the transport network in relation to the lead industry and agricultural trade in the Peak District and its environs from the medieval period to the 19th century.

Research on Exmoor

Grundy's studies of 'ancient highways' in Somerset and Devon identified numerous routes on the ridgeways of Exmoor which he considered to be of great antiquity: prehistoric in origin (Grundy 1939, map facing p 232; 1941 map facing p 162). His route number 110, the 'Brendon Ridgeway' crosses west Somerset from the Quantock Hills to Wood Barrow on the NW boundary of Exmoor Forest and is identified as an Anglo-Saxon *herepath* or highway, sometimes associated with the progress of Anglo-Saxon troops across the country (Grundy 1939, 285-287). Grinsell also considered

the ridgeways to be prehistoric in origin, he suggested that those on Exmoor had their origins in the Bronze Age, due to their proximity to barrows and cairns (1970, 142).

Charles Whybrow's thoughtful study of Exmoor's archaeology devoted a chapter to ancient routeways (Whybrow 1977). He recognised two types of ancient routeways: 'a single sunken way may be all that is left of an ancient road, now long disused', and braided hollow ways which he called 'traffic ruts' and described as 'narrow lanes worn by foot passengers or riders or packhorse trains, each lane being abandoned for easier ground as soon as it became too deep or muddy or otherwise hard to negotiate.' Whybrow noted examples of these between Mole's Chamber and Driver Cott; between Goat Hill Bridge and Pinkworthy Pond; at Exe Head (which he described as the 'Piccadilly Circus of the Moor' in pre-inclosure days) (Fig 3); on Hangley Cleave, and south of Simonsbath Bridge (Whybrow 1977, 54). Hazel Eardley-Wilmot also considered the topic of 'Early Roads' to be important enough to deserve a whole chapter in her history *'Yesterday's Exmoor.'* She identified six or seven prehistoric roads and seven medieval roads across Exmoor and described Exmoor's roads in the 16th century as long-used tracks, miry and rutted, used by strings of pack-ponies which carried loads of wool and cloth (Eardley-Wilmot 1990, 35-58).

The Exmoor NMP and related air photograph transcription projects have mapped the remains of Exmoor's ancient routeways from air photographs (Hegarty and Toms 2009). The most recent interpretation of these routes is as: 'a network of informal trackways [which] had developed over centuries, if not millennia....used by packhorses and ponies, usually driven in single file, laden with packs and baskets or pulling sledges' (Hegarty and Wilson-North 2014, 22).



Fig 3 Routeways at Exe Cleave: Charles Whybrow's 'Piccadilly Circus of the Moor' (Hazel Riley)

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Medieval roads on Exmoor

A network of routes across and around Exmoor was well established by the medieval period. Documents relating to the history of the Royal Forest of Exmoor record two routes in the 13th century. In 1219 the 'great way' from Road Castle, SE of Exford, ran along Winsford Hill to the River Barle and in 1298 a 'certain way' is noted from Cosgate to Fifstones; in 1300 this is described as a 'highway' (MacDermot 1973, 12).

The accounts of John Godde, the bailiff of the manor of Porlock in the early 15th century (1419-1420, 1422-1423, 1424-1426), when Elizabeth Harington was lady of the manor, give a glimpse of the sort of traffic using Exmoor's routeways in the medieval period. In 1422 John Godde went on horseback to Exeter and Topsham to buy wine, a journey which took four days. In 1424 he went with a wagon and two men to Dunster to fetch a pipe (half a tun or c 120 gallons) of wine. According to Chadwyck Healey: 'This proves that the highway in those days was available for a heavily laden wagon, and was not a mere path for pack horses. We do not hear of wheeled vehicles at Brendon' (Chadwyck Healey 1901, 262, 264). In the 1420s Sir Hugh Luttrell bought oxen to draw the many wagons of coal, lime, stone and firewood needed for work at Dunster Castle (Siraut 2009, 7).

This evidence from the eastern part of the study area contrasts with accounts of travel in the West Country in the 16th century. Hooker writes of the difficulties of travel in Devon in the mid- to late 16th century:

'[Devon] is for the most part wilde full of wastes heths and mores uphill and downhill...very paynfull for man or horse to travell as all strangers travelling the same can wytnes it. For they be ever so well monted upon their fine and dainty horses out of other countries after that they have travelled in this country but one Journey they can forbear the second'
(Blake 1915, 336).

John Leland's account of his journey from Dunster to Barnstaple, via Exford, Simonsbath and Brayford (Fig 4), gives a vivid account of travelling across Exmoor on horseback in the 16th century:

*'From Dunster to Exford Village 7 miles.
Of these 7 miles 3 or 4 of the first were all hilly and rocky, full of brooks in every hill's bottom and metely wooded.
These brooks by my estimation ran towards the Severn Sea.
The residue of the way to Exford was partly on a moor and somewhat barren of corn, and partly hilly, having many brooks gathering to the hither bank of Ex River. There is a little timber bridge at Exford over Ex brook, there being a small water. Ex rises in Exmoor at a place called Excrosse 3 miles by NW and so goes towards Tiverton 12 miles lower.
From Exford to Simonsbath Bridge 4 miles, all by Forest, barren and moorish ground, where is store and breeding of young cattle, but little or no corn or habitation.*

There runs at this place called Simonsbath a river between two great Moorish hills in a deep bottom, and there is a bridge of wood over this water. The water in summer most commonly runs flat upon stones easy to be passed over, but when rains come and storms of winter it rages and is deep. Always this stream is a great deal bigger water than Ex is at Exford, yet it resorts into Ex River.

The bounds of Somersetshire go beyond this stream one way by NW 2 miles or more to a place called the Span, the Tors; for their be hillocks of earth cast up in ancient time for marks and limits between Somersetshire and Devonshire, and hereabouts is the limits and bounds of Exmoor forest.

From Simonsbath Bridge I rode up a high Moorish hill, and so passing by 2 miles in like ground, the soil began to be somewhat fruitful, and the hills to be full of enclosures, until I came 3 miles farther to a poor village called Brayford, where runs a brook by likelihood resorting to Simonsbath Water and Ex.

From Brayford to Barnstaple 8 miles by hilly ground, having much enclosures for pasture and corn.'

(Bates 1887, 99)

Exmoor's roads in the 17th to 19th centuries

Leland's route between Dunster and Barnstaple was a well known highway in 1653, when it formed the boundary between the freeholds of the two purchasers of 'Exmore Chace', and in 1652 'Symondsburrow Bridge in Exmore' was presented at the Somerset Quarter Sessions as in great decay for want of repair (MacDermot 1973, 12-13). Thomas Westcote travelled this route in 1630, searching for stone settings, and described the difficulties of travelling through Devon's landscape: 'This soil of this country, being very uneven, full of hills and valleys, is very uneasy for travellers and their horses, and gives a barren and unfruitful show to the beholders; and being also very full of stones, is troublesome to pass through' (Westcote 1845, 35).

Fig 4 Hollow ways mark the route of the medieval road south of Simonsbath, used by Leland in 1540 (1m scale) (Hazel Riley)



In the 16th and 17th centuries, parishes were responsible for the upkeep of roads within their boundaries, under the jurisdiction of the local justices at quarter sessions. The Highways Act of 1555, which remained in force for 280 years, stipulated that persons holding land with an annual value of £50 or more, had to supply two men, with horses or oxen, a cart and tools, to work for four consecutive days every year. This was increased to six days by a statute in 1563 (Wright 1992, 1). Several documents relate to this practice in the study area, for example in 1790 a certificate of repair states that the highway in Luccombe, leading from Knacker's Hole to Broom Close Gate is in good repair, and William Sanford puts a case against the inhabitants of Exford for not repairing the King's common highway in Exford (SRO Q/SR/358/2/13; DD\SF/16/31/23).

Ogiby's *Road Maps of England and Wales* illustrates the principal routes in use in England and Wales in the 17th century by detailed strip maps (Ogilby 1675). Cities, towns, villages and hamlets on the roads are depicted, and routes off the main roads are also shown. There are two routes relevant to Exmoor: Route 33 London to Barnstaple and Route 65 Dartmouth to Minehead (Fig 1). Route 33 crosses the Exe at Hele Bridge, a wooden bridge at this time, and the Barle (Dunsbrook on the map) at the stone Town Bridge in Dulverton. It runs to the south of the study area, through Oldways End where the roads up to East Anstey and 'Exmore' are shown (Fig 5). Route 65 skirts the eastern edge of the study area and shows a route running up from Bury onto the ridge which is 'pasture on both sides' (Fig 6).

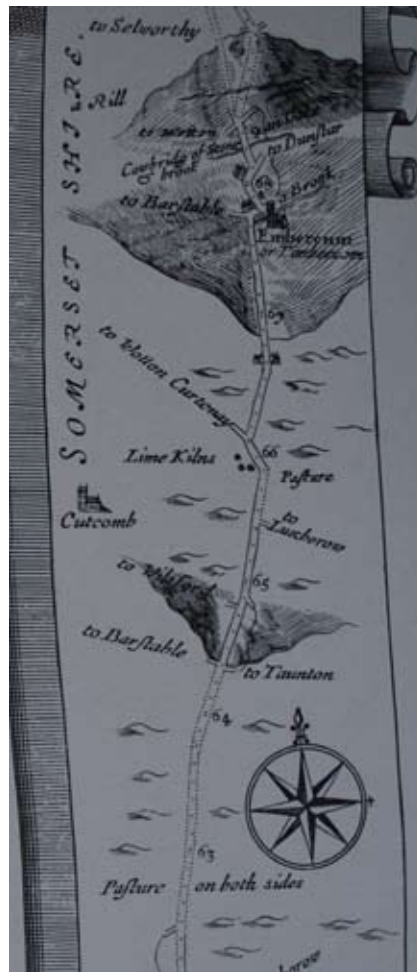


Fig 5 (far left)
Extract from
Ogilby's 1675 road
map Route 33
Hele Bridge and
Dulverton

Fig 6 (left) Extract
from Ogilby's 1675
road map Route 65
Timberscombe

Celia Fiennes, writing at the end of the 17th century, gives graphic accounts of the state of the roads in the West Country at this time, showing how packhorses were the most common form of transport for goods:

'...inclosures [in West Dorset and East Devon] that make the ways very narrow, so as in some places a Coach and Waggon cannot pass; they are forced to carry their Corn and Carriages on horses backs with frames of wood like panniers on either side the horse, so load it high and tie it with cords; this they do altogether the further westward they goe for the ways grows narrower and narrower on to the Lands End.'
(Morris 1982, 41)

'...all their carriages are here [in South Devon] on the backs of horses with sort of hookes like yokes stands upon each side of a good height, which are the receptacles of their goods, either wood furse or lime or coal or corn or hay or straw, or what else they convey from place to place; and I cannot see how two such horses can pass by each other, and yet these are the roads that are all here abouts; some little corners may jutt out that one may get out of the way of each other, but this but seldom.'
(Morris 1982, 200)

'Here [Cornwall] indeed I met with more inclosed ground and soe had more lanes and a deeper clay road, which by the raine the night before had made it very dirty and full of water; in many places in the road there are many holes and sloughs.... here my horse was quite down in one of these holes full of water....yet did retrieve his feete and got cleer off the place with me on his back.'
(Morris 1982, 203)

The topographer William Chapple (1718-81) found that strangers would take Devon roads to be 'watery Ditches' rather than public highways and a Gentleman's Magazine correspondent noted, in 1752, that the state of the roads was so bad that anyone travelling to 'terra incognita,' west of Dorset, 'dwells constantly on the horrible strip of dirty earth under his nose' (Milton 2006, 30; K G 1752, 518).

The Turnpike Trusts

During the 17th century it became clear that the English road network was unable to cope with the increasing amount of traffic. This was a particular problem in the south and east of the country where carts and wagons were replacing packhorses and people were beginning to travel by carriage (Defoe 1724-26, 153-7). The creation of Turnpike Trusts in the late 17th to early 19th centuries was a response to these problems. Taxes in the form of tolls were levied on the travellers passing along the major routes, rather than on the people who lived near them. The Minehead Roads Turnpike Trust (1765) was responsible for the route between Dulverton and Dunster. The earlier turnpike road followed the route mapped by Ogilby in 1675 (Ogilby 1675, plate 65), later replaced by what is now the A396 (Figs 1 & 7). The South Molton (1759) and Combe Martin (1838) Turnpike Trusts were responsible for the route between South Molton to Bratton Fleming and Combe Martin, west of the study area (www.turnpikes.org.uk).

Vancouver's account of the roads in Devon gives descriptions of the poor road conditions and the use of packhorses in the early 19th century:

'...the turnpike-roads have by no means that width prescribed by law, and required for the accommodation of the public- so essential to the giving a proper form, and afterwards keeping them in sufficient repair, The consequence is, that these narrow ways are raised so high in the middle, that without sides or bulwark to support them, they are, in a short time, by the traffic of the lime-carts, bilged, and forced out upon their sides, when the only passage remaining is confined to a narrow ridge on the top of the road, but which, from the excessive coarseness of the materials from which it is made, is soon broken into so many holes and unevennesses, as very much to endanger the knees of the horse, and the neck of the rider. It is truly surprising, however, to see with what speed and security the native horses of the country will pass over these rough and broken places, whether burthened or otherwise.'
(Vancouver 1808, 368-9)

'The height of the hedge-banks, often covered with a rank growth of coppice-wood, uniting and interlocking with each other over-head, completes the idea of exploring a labyrinth rather than passing through a much frequented country. This first impression will, however, be at once removed on the traveller's meeting with, or being overtaken by a gang of pack-horses. The rapidity with which these animals descend the hills, when not loaded, and the utter impossibility of passing loaded ones, require that the utmost caution should be used in keeping out of the way of the one, and exertion in keeping a-head of the other. A cross-way fork in the road or gateway, is eagerly looked for as a retiring spot to the traveller, until the pursuing squadron, or heavily loaded brigade, may have passed by. In these lanes it is absolutely impossible to form any idea of the surrounding country, as



Fig 7 Toll House on the Minehead Roads Road turnpike, Exebridge (Hazel Riley)

the size and depth of the abutting fields are only to be seen through a breach in the mound, over a stile or gateway.
(Vancouver 1808, 370-1)

William Marshall's detailed notes on his travels from Bideford to Barnstaple, South Molton, Dulverton, Minehead, Tiverton and Taunton give an excellent picture of the roads and road traffic around the study area in September 1794:

'On the shore of the estuary, opposite to the town [Bideford] are several limekilns....numbers of packhorses, and a few carts, loading, or waiting for loads.... this lime is carried fourteen or fifteen miles; chiefly on horseback'

'No wheeled carriages seen on the road between Bideford and Barnstaple'

'Leith carts and Highland sledges (or implements very much resembling them!) are seen in the streets of Barnstaple'

'The roads [between Barnstaple and South Molton] in a shameful state: evidently injured by the hedges'

'Meet a pair of wheels, the first from Bideford'

'Meet [on the road from South Molton to Dulverton] a drove of cart horses, and a string of saddle horses, on their way to the Fair of Barnstaple; the property of a Dorsetshire dealer'

'Meet strings of lime horses, Bampton Lime Works'

'Observe several wheel carriages – carts and wagons – on this road [Dulverton to Minehead], and in Dulverton: on their way to and from Minehead, and other parts of the coast'

'Three wheeled barrows, drawn by horses; used in setting about manure'

'Lime horses seen creeping up the steep sides of the hills....the road good, and the day fine'

'Packhorses in carriages of every kind; even to the gates, and within the streets of Exeter'

'Meet many lime carts [on the road from Tiverton to Taunton], from the works on the borders of Somersetshire. The lime mostly in bags: some in bulk. Packhorses laden with hay, in trusses....The road good: now mending, with flinty gravel, or broken flints....Meet more lime carts, and some waggons: the last of the West of England onstruction....Sandy road, and hollow way: the sub-stratum red sandy rock....Meet a string of culm carts; on their way from the Taunton Navigation to the Limeworks.'

(Marshall 1796b, 58-92)

The accounts of Edmund Rack during his survey of Somerset in the 18th century describe the state of the roads in the Hundred of Carhampton:

'The roads (except the turnpike from Dunster to Porlock, and that to Dulverton) are intolerably bad, being only deep narrow paths worn in the natural bed of rock and filled with loose rough stones. This, together with their steepness, renders travelling on horseback very dangerous.'

(McDermott and Berry 2011, 73)

Many paths and tracks on Exmoor fit this description today (Fig 8). Rack goes on to describe the roads parish by parish. Routes on the coast west of Minehead were difficult:

'[Culbone] cannot be approached on horseback without great difficulty and even danger, the road from Porlock being only narrow paths about 2 ft wide....filled with large loose stones and the roots of trees.'

'The roads [in Porlock parish] (except from Minehead) and the fields are so steep that no carriages of any kind can be used. All the crops are carried in with crooks on horses, and all the manure in wooden pots called dossels'
(McDermott and Berry 2011, 74; 87)

But inland the roads were just as perilous:

'The roads [in Cutcombe parish] admit no wheel carriages and are almost impassable on horseback, being very narrow and steep, and in many places a rough irregular bed of natural rocks full of holes and loose stones. All the manure, stone, coals, lime and crops are carried on horses.'

'The road to Luckham [from Stoke Pero]....is impassable for any carriage, being very steep, narrow and so incumbered with great loose stones that it is dangerous even for horses.'
(McDermott and Berry 2011, 82; 89)

Robert Southey, Romantic poet and friend of Coleridge and Wordsworth, travelled to Exmoor in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when the area was 'discovered' and chronicled the state of the roads and access to Exmoor's more remote coastal areas:



Fig 8 Deeply hollowed path from Tarr Farm to Ashway Side (Hazel Riley)

8th August 1799

'Criuckshank took me in his chair to Porlock, six miles [from Minehead]. Hedges luxuriantly high for the most part impede the view; through their openings dark hills are seen, and the combes that intersect them....Porlock is called in the neighbourhood the End of the World. All beyond is inaccessible to carriage or even cart. A sort of sledge is used by the country people resting upon poles like cart shafts.'

7th December 1836, Lynton

'Here we are in certainly the most beautiful spot in the West of England. I was here in 1799 alone and on foot. At that time the country between Porlock and Ilfracombe was not practicable for wheel carriages, and the inn at Lynton received all travellers in the kitchen. Instead of that single public house, there are now several hotels, and in its accommodation, and in the number of good houses which have been erected by settlers, Linton vies with any watering place in Devonshire.' (quoted in exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk: Exmoor's Literary Links Robert Southey and Exmoor)

There were people living in the early 20th century who could remember the state of the roads in the West Country and on Exmoor in the 19th century:

'The roads were in a very bad condition. The old Roman roads, long neglected, were nearly gone. The Devonshire devious ways existed, which had been formed by the feet of packhorses, who wandered right and left to avoid soft places until a track was made, against which banks were gradually thrown up to keep the cattle from straying from the adjacent fields (thus stereotyping forever the wanderings of the horses). These trackways were deeply water worn and often shelved to a point in the centre, where large, loose stones lay roughly scattered.' (William Thornton, quoted in Snell 1903, 68)

'Mr Kingdon, of Simonsbath, told us that his aunt, when a young woman, drove a team of packhorses from South Molton to Corner Brake on Exmoor for the purpose of fetching slate. He can point out the old tracks, which do not correspond in the least with the modern roads, and are remarkable for their directness.' (Snell 1903, 69)

Packhorses

The accounts quoted above suggest that the most common form of transport on Exmoor until the late 19th century was on horseback. Goods were also carried on horses and the tradition of strings of packhorses, laden with bundles and packages, crossing the most remote and difficult parts of Exmoor, can be seen in 20th-century works on Exmoor's history and archaeology (Whybrow 1977; Eardley-Wilmot 1990; Hegarty and Wilson-North 2014).

There is documentary evidence for the use of packhorses on Exmoor in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. There was a packhorse service from Bampton to London in 1637.

Heavy and bulky goods were expensive to move in this way: in 1753 the churchwardens of Bampton paid 10s 6d for nine horses to carry old lead to Tiverton and 17s 6d for 15 horses to bring new lead. At Winsford some of the old church bells were broken up in 1765. The metal was loaded onto packhorses and carried to Bilbie's foundry in Cullompton. The Rector of Selworthy paid £1 10s for six chimney pots, the cost of their transport from Barnstaple on three horses was 15s (Ridler 1960).

The packhorse carried loads on a wooden packsaddle. The packsaddle could be fitted with short crooks or long crooks. Short crooks stood up 2-3 feet above the saddle at an angle and were used for getting in faggots, hedge timber, cord wood, or sacks of corn. Long crooks stood up 6-7 feet and were used for hay and corn at harvest time. Packsaddles could also be fitted with panniers or baskets with bottoms that opened, for carrying loose materials like sand, lime and dung (Stanes 2008, 116) (Fig 9). Packsaddles and crooks would have been found in most Exmoor farmsteads. An inventory of the goods of Richard Hill, tenant of Simonsbath Farm who died in 1694, lists the following items: two packsaddles, a hackney saddle, girts (the special girth for a packsaddle, below) and crooks (Burton 1989, 40-41).

Christopher Marshall who lived in a Devon parish south of Exmoor, Uffculme SE of Tiverton, in the late 17th century, had a crook house with two pairs of long crooks and two pairs of short crooks, two pack saddles, four girts, one hackney saddle, and one pair of gambadoes (high leather boots) in it (Stanes 2008, 116).

William Thornton, a student at Selworthy in the 19th century (1847-1849), considered that packhorses were the most common sort of horse there. These horses were bred between a cart horse and a light hackney, and were different from the 'old packhorse, bred by a packhorse and a pack mare.' Thornton thought those with a strain of pony blood were even more useful (Snell 1903, 69-70).

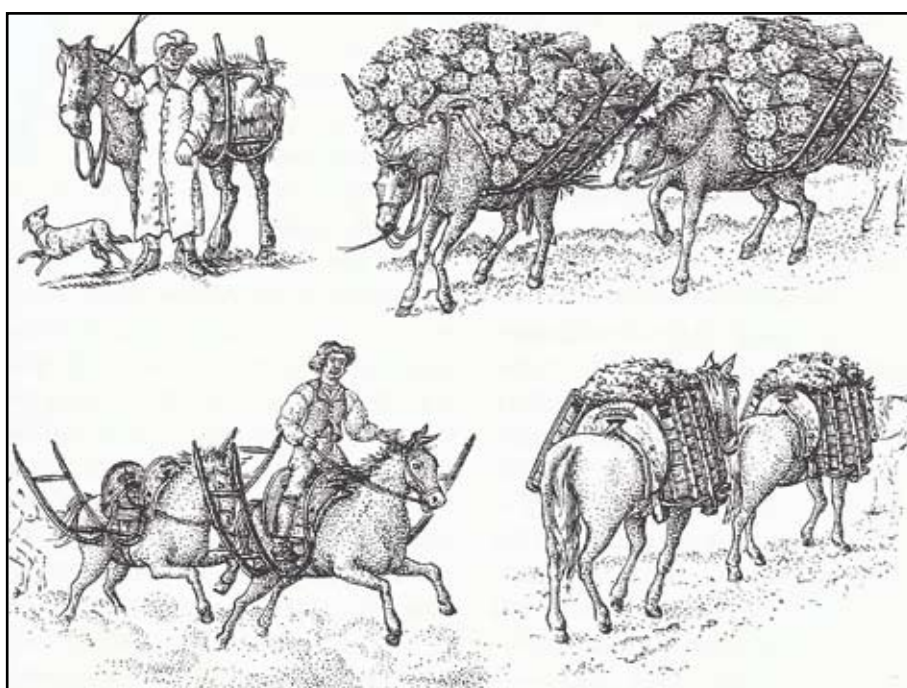


Fig 9 'Devonshire Carrier' by W H Pyne 1808 (from Brears 1998, 45)

A photograph of a sign from the Horse and Crook Inn, which occupied a large house west of the High Street in Dunster, is held by the Exmoor Society (Fig 10). The sign shows a horse with a (?) pannier mounted on a hackney saddle. The Glove Inn stood here from the 1650s to 1738, and was re-let in the 1740s as the Horse and Crook until its closure c 1901. Another inn, called the Pack Saddle or Pack Horse, stood near the market place in Dunster in the early 18th century; it was converted into a private house between 1735 and 1748 (Siraut 2009, 64-65).

Packhorse gear from an Exmoor farm

One of the most important findings to emerge from this study is the existence of a set of packhorse gear from an Exmoor farm. Dr Paul Quick Karkeek, President of the Torquay Natural History Society in the 1890s, presented the society with this exceptionally rare group of packhorse equipment. Its exact provenance is, unfortunately, not known, but the gear seems to come from a farm and was used for day to day agricultural tasks, rather than from a long distance carrier. Dr Karkeek visited Exmoor in July 1879 and it seems likely that it was during this visit that he came across the packhorse gear or heard about it. He began his visit with several other members of the Devonshire Association, with a coach ride to the Castle Hotel, Lynton, via Ilfracombe, Combe Martin and Parracombe. Karkeek left the party the next day and continued to explore, alone, mostly on foot. He walked along the coast to Porlock, climbed Dunkery Beacon, stayed for a couple of days at the Luttrell Arms, Dunster, where he dined on hashed vension and whortleberry tart, rode on the West Somerset Mineral Railway to Goosemoor, travelled down the Exe Valley to Dulverton then drove to Simonsbath where he was happily surprised:

'The little inn is part of an unfinished building, which evidently had been intended to be a spacious structure. The owners of this district apparently have a fancy for gigantic attempts and signal failures, for within a hundred yards of the inn

is another mansion almost built to the upper stories, but which has remained in that incomplete condition for many years. I was somewhat in doubt about my chances for supper, but fared much better than I expected; civilization has advanced so far and so rapidly that I was able to obtain a bottle of 1s 6d claret with my meal'
(Karkeek 1879).



Fig 10 Sign from the Horse and Crook Inn, Dunster (from a collection held by the Exmoor Society and reproduced with their permission)

The next day Dr Karkeek set off early for High Bray and walked as far as the Poltimore Arms with an Exmoor farmer and talked to him about ‘what he knew of things gone by.’ At High Bray he visited Lydcott and Lydcott Hall, before returning by rail from Castle Hill to stay at the Carnarvon Arms in Brushford. The account of his visit does indicate that the packhorse gear came from somewhere on Exmoor; perhaps from around Dunster or from the Simonsbath or High Bray areas.

The collection consists of two wooden packsaddles, four wooden dung pots, two sets of long crooks and two sets of short crooks (called crubs in the museum catalogue) (Brears 1998, catalogue numbers 1259-1268). The packsaddles from Exmoor are substantial structures (Fig 11). Both are virtually identical in size and construction. The saddles are 57cm long, 77cm wide (max) and 60cm high. Each end is made from two planks which are fixed together with a scarf joint, pegged with wooden dowels. Two holes, 2.5cm in diameter, are drilled through each end, these take the ends of the crooks. The ends are fixed together with planks, shaped to fit the horse’s back. A pad, made from canvas and leather, stuffed with combed wheat straw, protected the horse. Both ends of the saddle have been carefully repaired with iron straps and nails around the scarf joints (Figs 12 & 13).

Fig 11 (below right) Packsaddle with canvas and straw padding, Exmoor Fig 12 (bottom left) Packsaddle showing wooden planks Fig 13 (below left) Detail of repair to scarf joint in packsaddle Fig 14 (bottom left) Short crooks fitted to packsaddle (all from Exmoor in Torquay Museum) (Hazel Riley)



The saddle was secured with a special girth, made of horsehair webbing and rope which passed over the saddle and completely around the horse's belly. These were known as 'sissing girts' (Brears 1998, 44). Loads could be attached directly to the saddle, and extra equipment allowed more specialised loads to be carried, particularly around the farm. Short crooks, fitted to the saddle through the two holes in the saddle ends, 42cm wide and 45cm deep, were used for carrying cordwood, large stones and other heavy items. Larger crooks, made of bent willow, 1m deep, were used to carry loads of corn, straw and hay (Figs 14 & 15)

Pairs of pots were used to carry loads such as sand and dung. The two pairs of pots from Exmoor are, like the saddles, virtually identical in size and construction. The pots are solidly constructed of wooden planks and are 43cm wide, 66cm high and 38cm wide (Fig 16). The pots are formed by five planks, bent to fit a wooden frame. The bottom of the pot is also made of wooden planks, hinged to allow the quick release of material. The example in store at Torquay Museum has a simple catch made from a small piece of wood (Fig 17). Two pots were linked by chains which were slung over a wooden packhorse saddle (Fig 18).



Fig 15 (bottom left) Long crooks, Exmoor (Torquay Museum) (Hazel Riley)

Fig 16 (bottom right) Dung pot, Exmoor, 0.5m scale (Torquay Museum) (Hazel Riley)



Fig 17 (top left) Dung pot showing hinged base, Exmoor (Torquay Museum) (Hazel Riley)

Fig 18 (top right) Back of dung pot with chains, Exmoor (Torquay Museum) (Hazel Riley)

All of the objects show signs of hard work: the saddles have been patched and repaired and the ends have marks from ropes lashed around the load and through canvas cleats (Figs 13 & 19).

The packhorse gear from Exmoor forms part of the Devon Farmhouse Collection at Torquay Museum and some research was carried out when the current display was set up. The packhorse gear from Exmoor is exceptionally rare and may well be the only surviving set of equipment in the country. Measurements of the wooden packhorse saddles indicated that the type of horse the saddle was made for is now extinct and a cast of the animal was made to fit the gear (B Chandler, pers comm) (Fig 20).

Wains, butts and sleds

William Marshall, writing at the end of the 18th century, is definite about the lack of wheeled transport – wagons and carts – in the West Country:

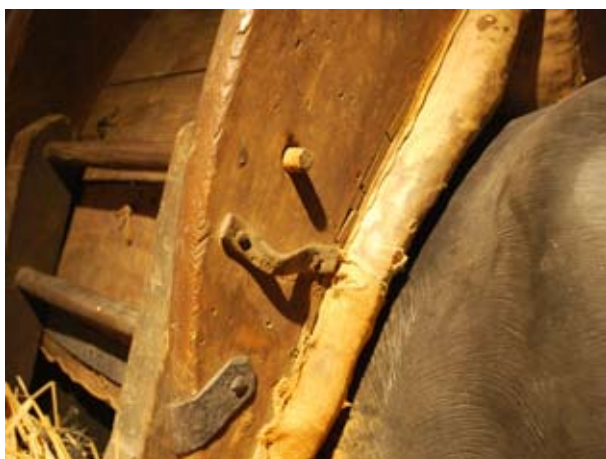


Fig 19 Repair, canvas cleat and rope marks on the end of packsaddle, Exmoor (Torquay Museum) (Hazel Riley)



Fig 20 Packhorse, packsaddle and short crooks, Exmoor (Torquay Museum) (Hazel Riley)

'Formerly, carriage of every kind was done entirely on the backs of horses; except in harvest, when sledges, drawn by oxen, were sometimes used; also heaps of manure, in the field, were dragged abroad in small cart sledges, either by oxen or horses. Twenty years ago, there was not a "pair of wheels" in the country, at least not upon a farm; and nearly the same may be said at present. Hay, corn, straw, fuel, stones, lime, etc are, in the ordinary practice of the District [West Devon], still carried on horseback.'
 (Marshall 1796a, 113-114)

The Uffculme inventories show that wheeled farm carts of any kind were rare in Devon in the 16th-18th centuries. In the 17th century Nicolas Dowdney had one wain and wheels, Elizabeth Bishop had two pairs of wain wheels, a wain body and three putts, and Richard Goodridge had a wain body, wheels, putts and a sledge. An inventory and valuation of goods attached to the will of John Knight, husbandman of Lynton, dated 23rd June 1624, included one butt and one pair of wheels and a wain body (Chanter 1906a, 125). A sledge or sled was a small cart on runners, pulled by a horse and common in hilly areas like Exmoor and Dartmoor, on farms where even one wheeled carts and barrow were impractical (Fig 21). A putt or butt was a low loading, one-horse tipping cart (Fig 22); a wain was not a four-wheeled wagon, seen on larger Exmoor farms in the later 19th century like the short bodied box wagon, built at Brushford in 1870 and used by John Fry at Dulverton, now in the Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life (Fig 23), but a low loading hay cart, without sides, and pulled by oxen (Stanes 2008, 116-117). Five farms on the Nettlecombe estate in 1619 had wainhouses (Alcock and Carson 2007, 149-150).

Fig 21 (right) Horse and sledge, Foxworthy, Manaton (Cox and Thorp 2001, 114)



Fig 22 (below) Two-wheeled butt, Manor Mill, Porlock (Chadwyck Healey 1901, 267)

Fig 23 (below right) Four-wheeled wagon, built in Brushford 1870 (Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Rural Life) (Hazel Riley)



THE DISTRIBUTION OF EXMOOR'S ANCIENT ROUTEWAYS

The distribution of the evidence for Exmoor's ancient routeways from the Exmoor HER is shown in Figure 24. The whole of the study area has been covered by the Exmoor NMP and related EH air photographic transcriptions (Hegarty and Toms 1999; Riley and Wilson-North 2001, fig 1.16); the majority of the records from the Exmoor HER for routeways are from NMP records. This distribution has been refined by access to georeferenced Lidar data for the central area of the study area, where this project has mapped the extant routeways visible on the Lidar images (Fig 25). Although field investigation, particularly during the course of the Exmoor Mire Project, is still locating previously unrecorded sites, this distribution reflects the extant evidence on the ground, with the exception of one landscape type. These are wooded areas and the effect of particular fieldwork projects can be seen in the current distribution. The concentration of sites in the woodlands of the Barle Valley north of Dulverton, at Sherracombe, and in Horner Woods near Stoke Pero, all reflect survey work concentrated in woodlands rather than a lack of routeways in other wooded areas (Cannell 2003; McDonnell 1994; Berry 1995).

There are a number of tracks and hollow ways in the eastern side of the study area which are associated with access to settlements, both current, shrunken and deserted, and access to field systems, again both in current use and relict fields. These are particularly evident around the dispersed settlements centred on Codsand and in the upper valleys of the rivers Quarme and Exe. The sites on the southern edge of the survey area, on Molland and Anstey Commons, represent ways from the settlements in the Yeo Valley to the south up onto their commons, and ways across commons and former commons to settlements in the Dane's Brook Valley.

The distribution of sites on the western side of the survey area represent former routes up onto the commons and so to the former Royal Forest from the Barnstaple and South Molton areas, and from villages and farms which occupy the combes leading up onto the higher ground. To the NW and north former routes are associated with access to settlements and fields, with an emphasis on access to the commons from the moorland edge farms.

The routeways associated with the former Royal Forest are of particular interest and their distribution is striking. Access points to the Forest are marked by a concentration of hollow ways: at Sandyway, Buttery Corner, Kinsford Gate, Mole's Chamber, Saddle Gate, Badgworthy, Alderman's Barrow, Red Stone Gate, Willingford and Lanacre. The importance of Simonsbath as a river crossing is shown by the convergence of several routes at the river Barle.

The existence of several routes into and across the Forest is demonstrated, both by the historic mapping and by the field evidence, and this is a very clear reflection of how the Forest was used prior to enclosure: for turbarry, stone and mineral extraction, and, most importantly, for pasture of cattle, ponies and sheep.

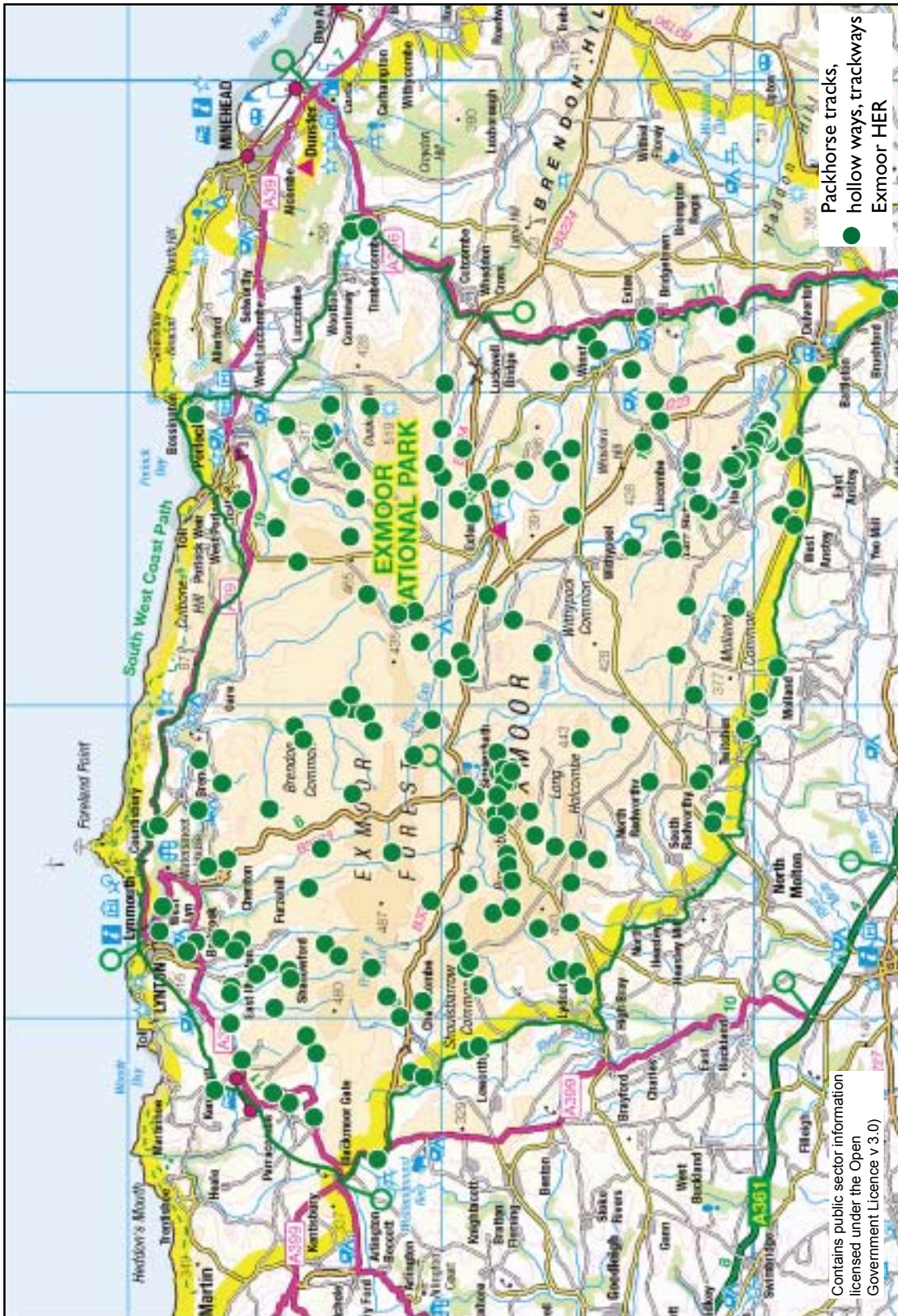


Fig 24 Distribution of packhorse tracks, hollow ways and trackways, Exmoor HER data



Fig 25 Hollow ways and tracks plotted from Lidar data, Exmoor Forest and environs

THE FIELD EVIDENCE FOR EXMOOR'S ANCIENT ROUTEWAYS

Extent

The extent of the field evidence for Exmoor's ancient routeways is clearly shown in Figures 24 and 25. The longest routeways can be seen within and around the former Royal Forest. The route from Holywell Cross, NE of North Molton, can be traced for some 4kms across North Molton Ridge to Sandyway Cross. Within the Royal Forest routeways run for over 4kms from Mole's Chamber to Exe Head and the route along the western boundary of the Forest runs for over 4kms from Mole's Chamber to Saddle Gate. Shorter routes can be seen as they descend to stream and river crossings, such as those on West and East Pinford at the headwaters of Badgworthy Water which are some 200m long, and the route down from Furzehill Common to Hoar oak Water which is 400m long (Fig 26).

Morphology

On the former Royal Forest and the surrounding commons the most common type of routeway is a hollow way. These are often substantial earthwork features which cross Exmoor's landscape. In many places numerous tracks have developed where traffic has chosen to abandon one track in favour of another, to avoid deep mud and ruts. These multiple tracks - sometimes called braided hollow ways - developed where the unenclosed nature of the Royal Forest and commons allowed the spreading out of the routes. Good examples can be seen at Exe Head and on Great Vintcombe, between Moorland Way and Mole's Chamber (Figs 3 & 27). The antiquity of these routes is demonstrated by their morphology: the numerous hollows have developed over centuries of use. This is particularly evident on Black Hill, NE of Mole's Chamber, where a route has been blocked by another routeway (Fig 28).



Fig 26 (right) Hollow ways, Furzehill Common (Hazel Riley)

Fig 27 (bottom right) Braided hollow ways at crossing of Barle, SW of Driver (Hazel Riley)

Fig 28 Hollow ways, Black Hill (Hazel Riley)



The braided hollow ways are fairly uniform in size. On the former Royal Forest typical measurements of the hollows are 1.5-3m wide (at base) and 1-1.5m deep on Great Vintcombe and up to 3.5m wide and 1-2m deep on Black Hill, north of Mole's Chamber. On the commons the remains are very similar: on Molland Common and East Anstey common the hollow ways are 1.5-3.5m wide and up to 1m deep. The hollows are often flanked by one or, more usually, two banks and are U-shaped in profile (Figs 29 & 30).

Routeways associated with settlements are the routes which once connected farms with their fields and neighbours, and which became redundant as wheeled transport took the place of packhorses. These are usually single tracks, constrained between enclosed fields, which can be also deeply hollowed. A good example of this is Holloway Lane which was once the way to Codsand from Exford. This is now an overgrown path, in places a U-shaped hollow, 1.5-3m wide and over 2m deep, flanked by hedge banks. The route between Parsonage Farm and Westwater is a similar feature: it is now a hollow, up to 2m wide and 1.5m deep (Figs 31 & 32).

Excavations

A section was excavated across a hollow way just to the north of Friendship Farm, on the western edge of the survey area, during the construction of a pipeline in 2000. The western bank was 2m wide with a stone face; the eastern bank had a core of loose earth and stone, with a probable stone face. A hollow way to the north of Parracombe

was investigated as part of the same recording project. One hundred metres of the former surface of the hollow way was exposed during groundwork for the pipeline. The road was constructed from a single course of large unmortared stone blocks bedded into a loam matrix forming a level surface 3.2-3.6m wide. Along the eastern edge of the road was a 2m wide track surfaced with cobbles and grit (Whitton 2000).

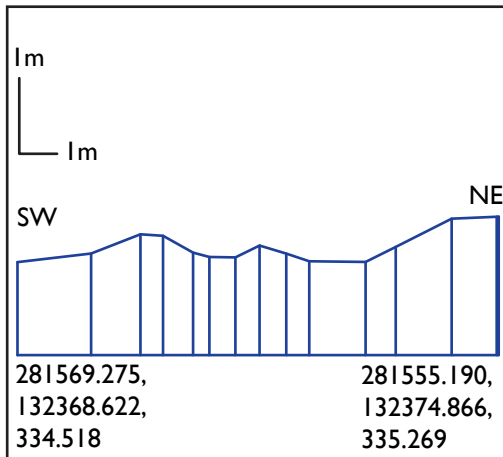


Fig 29 Profile of hollow ways between White Post and Upper Willingford Bridge (vert x 2)

Fig 30 U-shaped profile of the hollow way on Wilmersham Common 1m scale (Hazel Riley)

Landscape and local topography

Figure 25 shows the distribution of routeways in relation to the topography of Exmoor on a landscape scale: most are located on or near the former Royal Forest at elevations of over 400m OD. The concentrations of braided hollow ways occur in sorts of locations: on the approaches to the Royal Forest and where routeways traverse sloping ground at river crossings. The routeways which cross North Molton ridge are good examples of the former (Fig 33). The routeways at crossing points of the river Barle at Simonsbath and Moorland Way, SW of Driver, are good examples of the latter. They can also be seen at the headwaters of Badgworthy Water and in the Hoar oak Valley (Fig 34).

Fig 31 Holloway Lane, Codsend (Hazel Riley)



Fig 32 Hollow way SE of Westwater Farm (Hazel Riley)



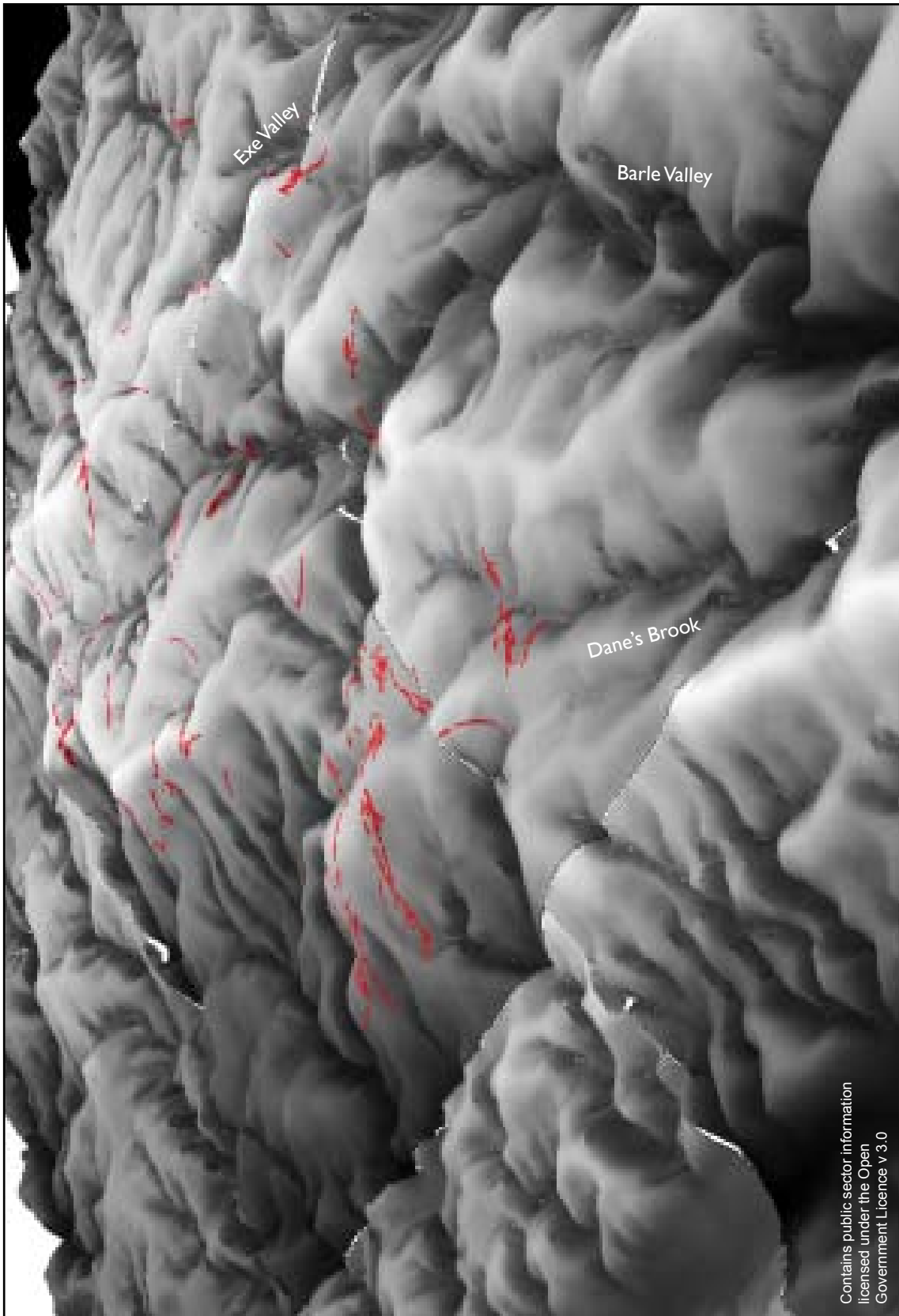


Fig 33 Routeways crossing North Molton Ridge

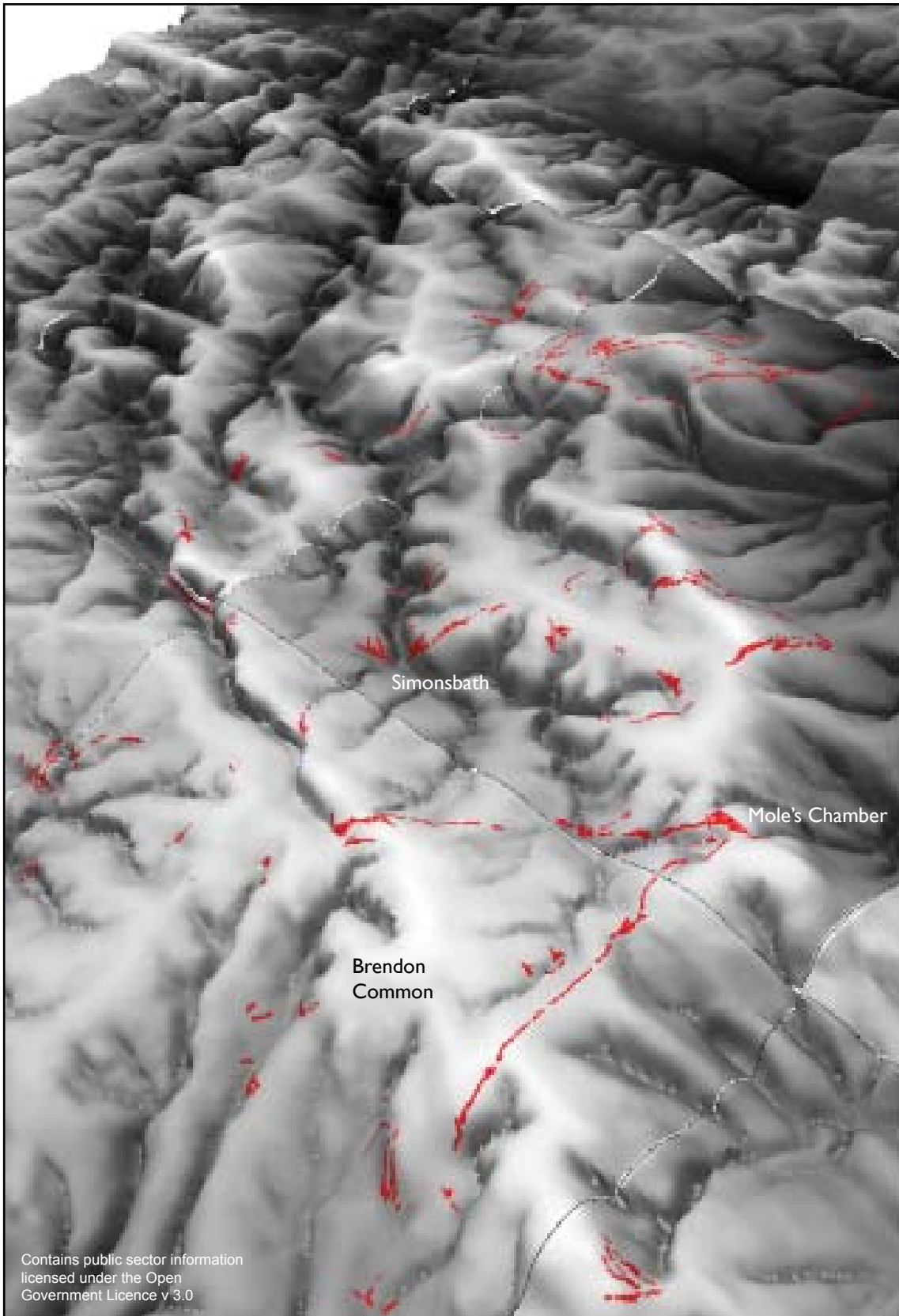


Fig 34 Routeways crossing the Barle and Badgeworthy Water

EXMOOR'S ANCIENT ROUTEWAYS AND THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

Information from Exmoor HER and *The Field Archaeology of Exmoor* (Riley and Wilson-North 2001) was used to create distribution maps which plotted the distribution of routeways with prehistoric and Roman sites, medieval settlements, industrial sites and the changing extents of the Royal Forest of Exmoor.

Prehistoric and Roman archaeology

Lithic monuments

The spatial association between lithic monuments and routeways appears to be strong, but this is most likely to be the result of the distribution of the lithic monuments which are almost entirely restricted to the former Royal Forest and surrounding commons (Fig 35). However, the importance of certain lithic monuments as markers for routes across the Forest and commons cannot be dismissed entirely. The stone row on Thornworthy Little Common lies right at the western edge of the route along the western edge of the Royal Forest which here survives as a number of reed filled hollows (Fig 36). A similar relationship can be seen on the NW side of Lanacombe, where a single upright stone lies at the western edge of a substantial hollow way leading to Hoccombe Water (Figs 37 & 38). Westcote, writing in the early 17th century, saw Exmoor's lithic monuments as 'set out as guides and directions, the better to conduct strangers in the way over those wastes' (1845, 90), probably drawing on Camden's description of 'certain monuments of antique work....stones pitched in order, some triangle wise, others in a round circle....to direct those (as it would seem) who were to travel that way (1610, quoted in Chanter and Worth 1905, 377).



Fig 36 Stone row on the edge of hollow ways, Thornworthy Little Common (Hazel Riley)

Fig 37 (below left) 1 m scale in middle distance on edge of hollow way, Lanacombe (Hazel Riley)

Fig 38 (below) Upright stone on western side of hollow way at Lanacombe (Hazel Riley)





Fig 35 Lithic monuments and routeways

Barrows and cairns

The majority of the major barrow groups are sited on the ridges and summits of the commons which surround the Former Royal Forest. One of the most striking things to note from the distribution of extant routeways in relationship to the barrows and cairns is the lack of spatial association between them (Fig 39). On the western edge of Exmoor a route from Barton Town crosses Challacombe Common at the western end of the Chapman Barrows, avoiding the higher ground where the barrows are sited (Fig 40). Similarly, at Western Common and Five Barrows Hill the routeways skirt the south and west flanks of Western Common, away from the ridge of Five Barrows Hill and the barrows, heading for the river crossings at Comerslade, and on Benjamy the routes descend the ridge towards a ring cairn, which itself has been used as part of the Royal Forest boundary, but divert to the SE to the ford at Gammon's Corner (Figs 41 & 42).

In only a handful of instances do the routeways have a close spatial association between barrows and cairns. At Wood Barrow on the NW edge of the former Royal Forest the long routeway which follows the western boundary of the Royal Forest heads towards

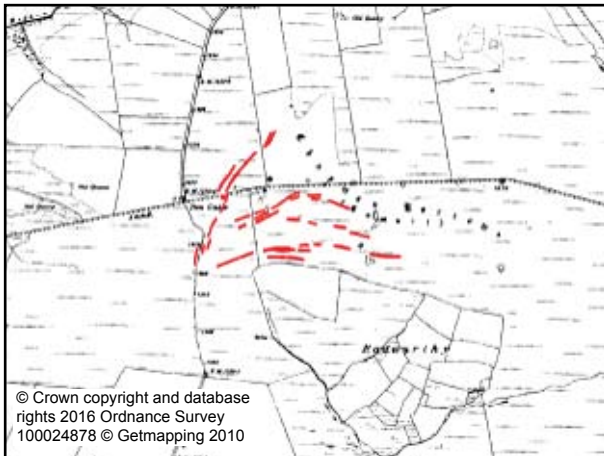


Fig 40 Routeways and the Chapman Barrows

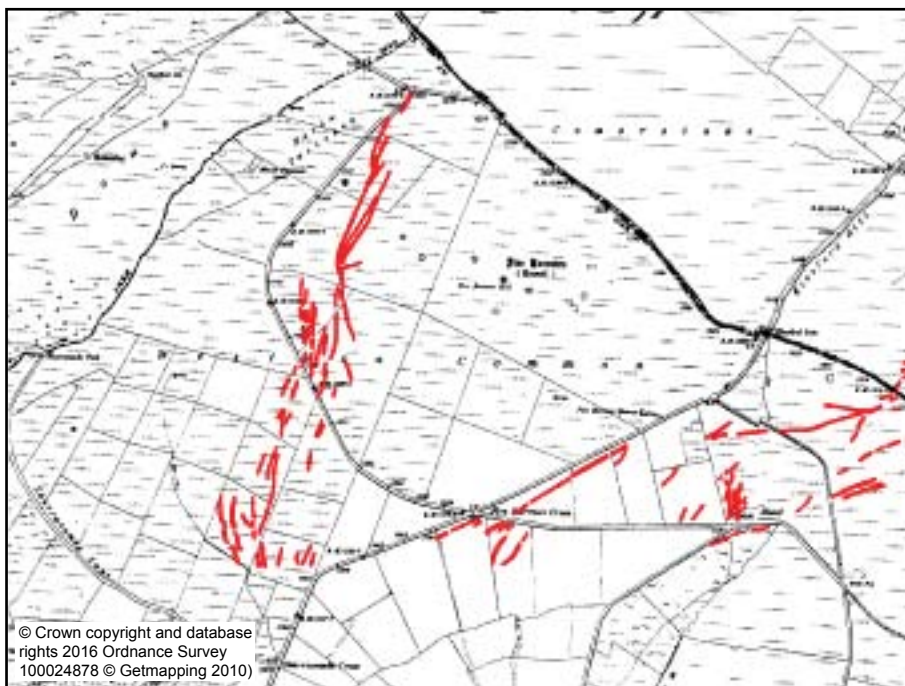
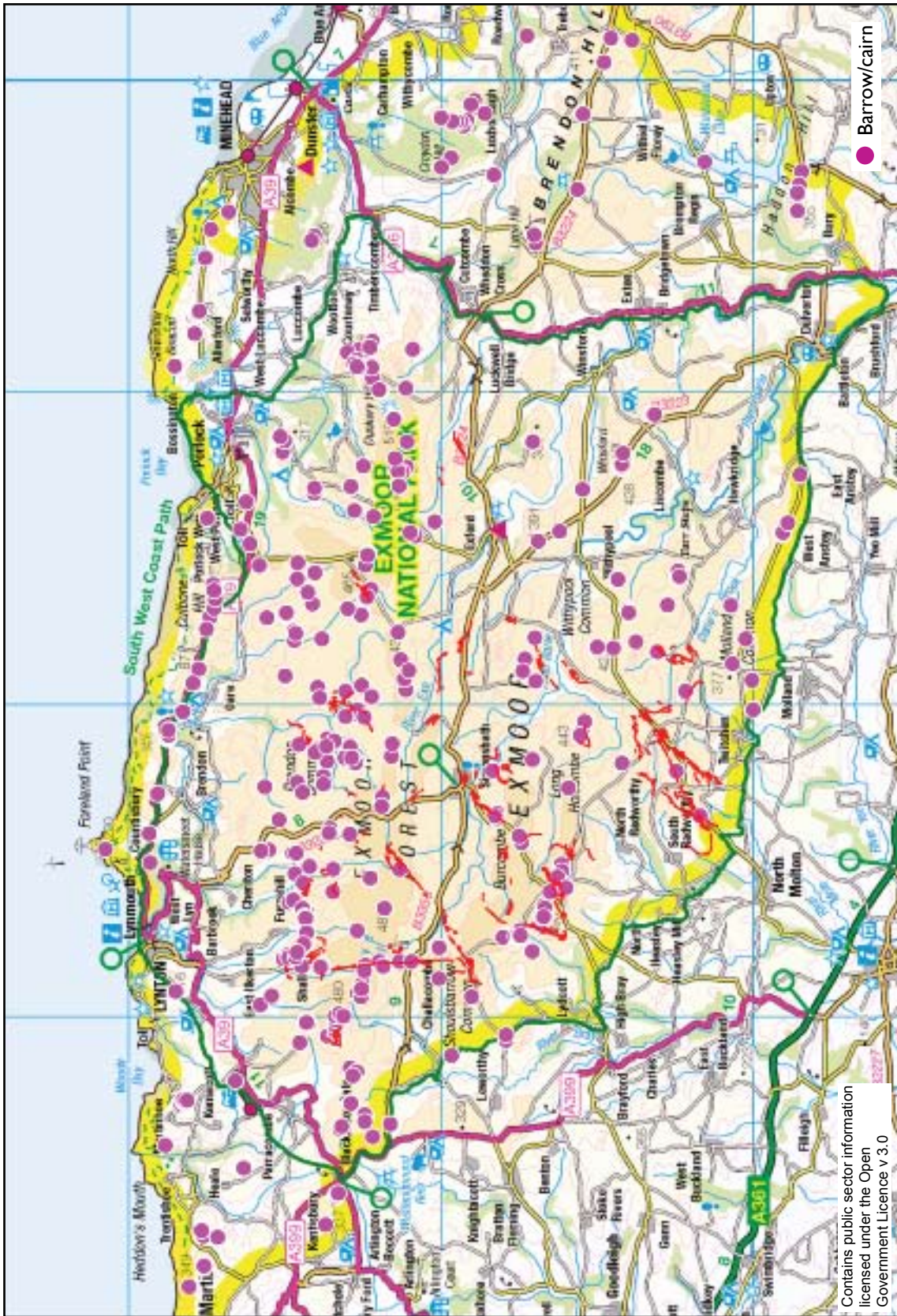


Fig 41 Routeways on Five Barrows Hill



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Fig 39 Barrows and cairns and routeways

Wood Barrow but diverts to the east to avoid the barrow (Fig 43). On North Molton Ridge the smaller of the two barrows on the summit has been used as a marker for the route over the ridge: the routeway skirts the very edge of the barrow before descending to Sandyway Cross (Fig 44).

Later prehistoric settlements, hillforts and Roman forts

There appears to be no spatial association between later prehistoric settlements, hillforts and Roman forts and Exmoor's extant routeways (Fig 45).

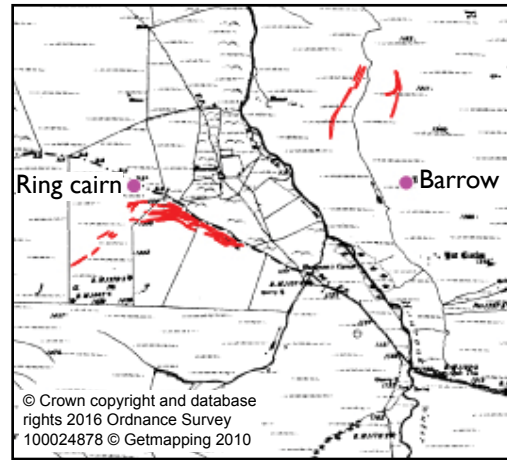


Fig 42 (above right) Routeways and ring cairn, Benjamy

Fig 43 (right) Lidar image showing routeway respecting Wood Barrow (© Geomatics)

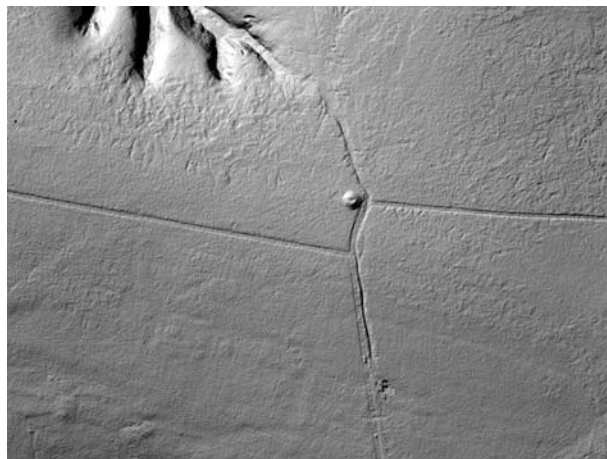


Fig 44 (below) Lidar image showing routeway skirting the southern edge of a barrow on North Molton Ridge (© Geomatics)

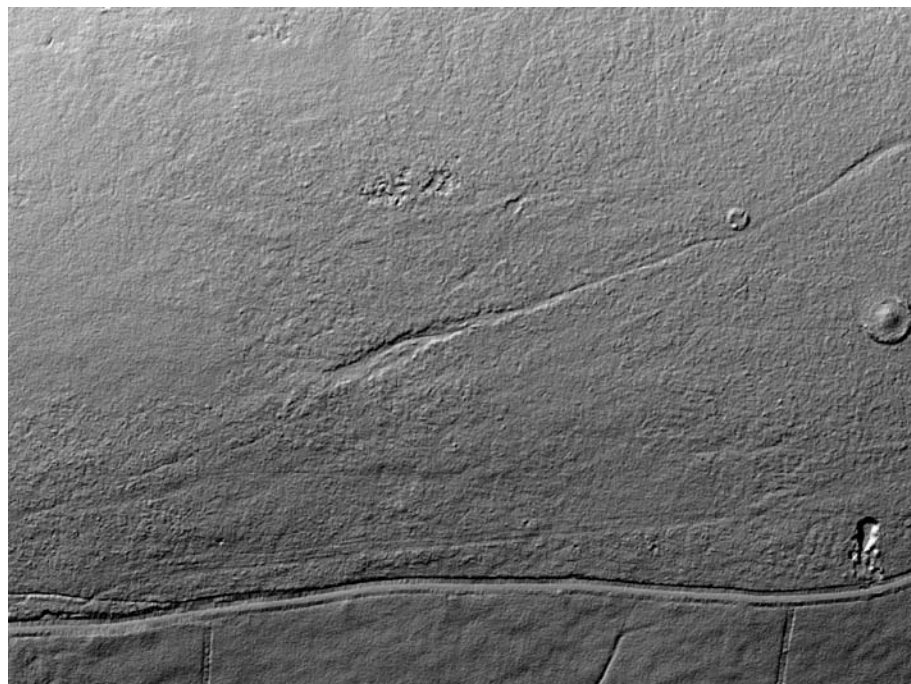




Fig 45 Later prehistoric settlements, hillforts and Roman forts and routeways

Medieval settlements

The distribution of deserted medieval settlements and medieval churches and chapels was chosen here to represent the major elements of the settlement pattern in and around the study area in the medieval period.

There are two distinct patterns to this distribution (Fig 46). The first is the lack of a spatial association between the medieval churches and chapels and the extant ancient routeways on Exmoor. This is because the churches and chapels are almost exclusively associated with settlements which continue to exist into the present and so the routes associated with access to these settlements have become part of the current road network.

The second is the association between certain extant routeways and deserted medieval settlements. Good examples of this occur on the commons close to the northern boundary of the former Royal Forest. The braided hollow ways which descend Furzehill Common ford Hoarok Water at a point which provides access to the deserted medieval settlement on Cheriton Ridge; hollow ways on the west and east of Badgworthy Water lead to the deserted medieval settlement of Badgworthy (Fig 26). To the east of the Royal Forest, south of Porlock, hollow ways crossing Doverhay Down and Ley Hill led to the deserted medieval settlement on Ley Hill (Fig 47). This route is particularly important as excavations suggest that the settlement had fallen out of use by the 14th century AD (Richardson 1999; Thackray 2001), and the chronological



implications of this are discussed below (Chronology). On the western edge of Exmoor, at Barton Town, a hollow way leads from the church and settlement, NE across Challacombe Common (Fig 48). This routeway is not only an important example of a route from a settlement to a common, but also marks the boundary of a ring-fenced holding associated with Barton Town, again the chronological implications of this are discussed below (Chronology).



Fig 47 The hollow ways on Ley Hill, NW of the deserted medieval settlement (Hazel Riley)

Fig 48 Hollow way NE of Barton Town (Hazel Riley)



Fig 46 Deserted medieval settlements, chapels and churches and routeways

Industrial sites

Iron working and iron extraction sites, areas of turbarry and lime kilns have been mapped as representative of the exploitation of Exmoor's resources for minerals, fuel and for agricultural improvement.

Iron working and iron extraction sites

The earliest iron working sites in and around the study area do not have a spatial relationship with any of the extant routeways (Fig 49). The routeways recorded south of the Roman iron smelting site at Sherracombe all appear to be post-medieval in date (Cannell 2005). The relationship between the medieval and post medieval iron working sites and extant routeways is, however, of greater interest.

In the NE corner of the study area, south of Porlock, three medieval or post-medieval iron working sites have been identified. Iron smelting and smithing slag found in a field east of Wilmersham Farm and iron smelting slag found at Cloutsham Farm indicate that iron working was being undertaken at these settlements in the medieval and/or post-medieval periods (Fig 50). Some 0.8km to the NE of Cloutsham Farm, the remains of an iron hammer mill lie on the edge of Horner Water in Horner Wood. This mill is recorded as being set up in the late 16th century by George Hensley from Selworthy (information from Exmoor HER numbers 7424; 15415; 15416). A network of well used paths and tracks lead from the villages of West Luccombe and Horner through the woods to settlements on the edge of the woodland at Wilmersham, Stoke Pero and Cloutsham. Several hollow ways and disused paths have been recorded in the woods. One, on Cloutsham Ball, is associated with a charcoal burning platform (Fig 51).



Cloutsham. Several hollow ways and disused paths have been recorded in the woods. One, on Cloutsham Ball, is associated with a charcoal burning platform (Fig 51).



Fig 50 (above left) Wilmersham Farm on the edge of Wilmersham Wood (© Copyright Chris Andrews and licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic Licence)

Fig 51 (left) Charcoal burning platform, Cloutsham Ball (Hazel Riley)

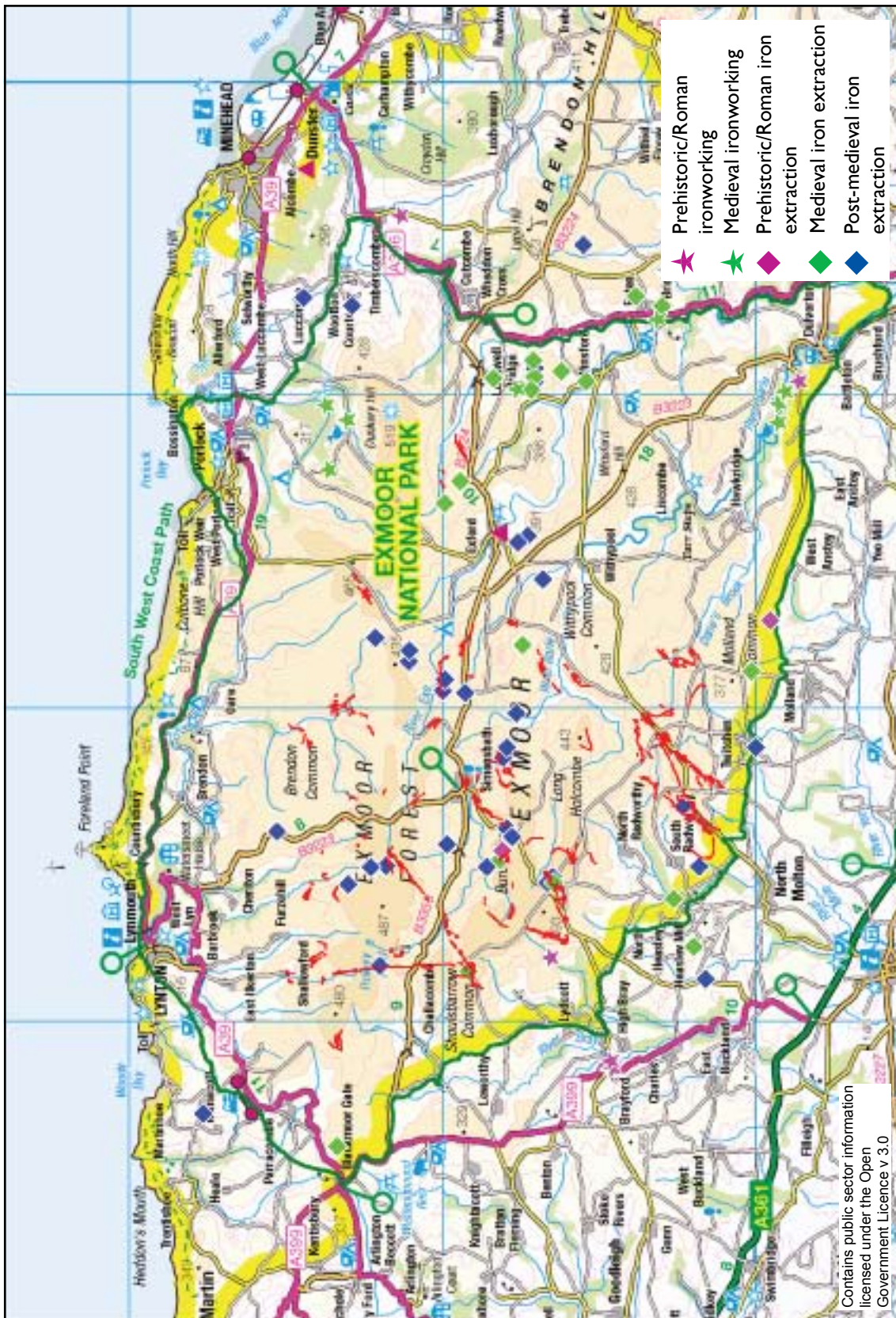


Fig 49 Ironworking and iron extraction sites and routeways

A series of deep hollow ways run down through the woods below Stoke Pero and Cloutsham, these have clearly not been used for some considerable time and could well be associated with access from the woodland edge settlements down to Horner and West Luccombe where packhorse bridges, with cobbled surfaces, take the path over Horner Water (Figs 52 & 53). The metal and iron objects made at Wilmersham and Cloutsham were probably for more than local domestic use, and may have used the routeways to access markets at Porlock and possibly farther afield.

At Hangley Cleave, on the SW edge of the Royal Forest, several hollow ways are cut by the remains of iron mining. The routeways are cut by N/S 19th-century adits which can be dated to 1856-7, and by an openwork, part of which may well date from the medieval period (Fig 54). This has implications for the chronology of the routeways in this part of the Royal Forest (Chronology). A similar relationship occurs to the SW of Mole's Chamber, where a large quarry, which has been interpreted as possible pre-19th-century iron openwork (Exmoor HER 2802) cuts some of the routeways leading to Mole's Chamber (Fig 55). Some 2kms to the NE of Hangley Cleave is the massive openwork known as Roman Lode. Excavations and analysis of the earthworks indicates that mineral extraction here began in the middle Bronze Age and continued in the Iron Age, Roman and medieval periods (Fletcher 1997; Exmoor HER 6804). Several hollow ways are cut by the openwork (Fig 56), suggesting that these routeways have the potential to be of considerable antiquity (Chronology).



Fig 52 (left) Packhorse bridge at West Luccombe (Hazel Riley)

Fig 53 (below) Cobbled path on the packhorse bridge at West Luccombe (Hazel Riley)

Fig 54 (below left) Hollow ways cut by 19th-century and earlier iron mining at Hangley Cleave (© Geomatics)



Several of the main 19th-century iron mines in and around the former Royal Forest are close to areas of routeways, particularly around Simonsbath. The hollow way NW of Wheal Eliza, a 19th-century copper and iron mine, has been interpreted as access for the mine (Exmoor HER 2905). The route is not marked on the 1st edition map and it seems more likely that the track on the north bank of the River Barle from the Simonsbath to the mine was the main access route and the hollow ways are part of the network of older routes which converge at Simonsbath. At the iron mines of Blue Gate and Hangley Cleave, the 19th-century workings clearly cut hollow ways, as does the metalled track to the 19th-century iron mine at Cornham Ford (Fig 54).

Lime kilns

The extant routeways have no spatial association with the distribution of lime kilns in the study area. These generally date from the 18th and 19th centuries and are either at the coast or following outcrops of limestone (Fig 57).

Fig 55 (right) Pre 19th-century quarry or openwork cutting routeways SW of Mole's Chamber (Hazel Riley)



Fig 56 (below right) Hollow way cut by the Roman Lode openwork (Hazel Riley)





Fig 57 Lime kilns, turbarry, 19th-century Forest farms and routeways

Turbary

The distribution of areas of peat cutting and extant routeways shows very little spatial association (Fig 57). This agrees with a recent study of peat cutting on Exmoor which did not find a great deal of evidence for the survival of tracks or routes associated with the extraction of peat (Riley 2013a). During the transcription of the routeways from the Lidar data, a series of routeways leading to disused areas of turbary at the Chapman Barrows were recorded (Fig 58).

Nineteenth-century farms in the former Royal Forest

For the former Royal Forest, the distribution of farms established in the 19th century has been considered here (Fig 57). A series of track ways between Barcombe and Barkham are probably associated with access to the farm at Barkham, established before 1841 on land allotted to the Earl of Carnarvon (Burton 1989, 83), but there are no other spatial associations with the routeways and 19th-century farmsteads on the former Royal Forest. At Willingford, for example, the routeways converge at Upper Willingford Corner, over 1km to the south of the farm (Fig 59).

Fig 58 Lidar image showing routeways and turbary at the Chapman Barrows (© Geomatics)

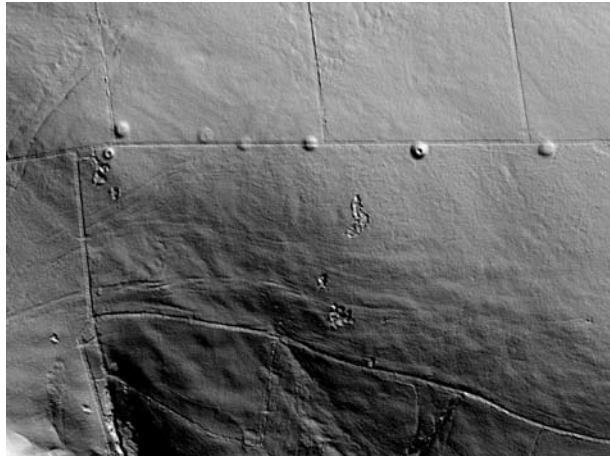


Fig 59 Hollow ways south of Willingford Farm (Hazel Riley)



The Royal Forest of Exmoor

The changing boundaries of the former Royal Forest of Exmoor are shown in Figure 60. These are taken from information and maps in MacDermot's *A History of the Forest of Exmoor* (1973, 107-136; 137-159; 181-2). It is difficult to relate the routeways to the earliest boundary as it is located mostly outside the study area. The western Forest boundary dates from the 14th century and several routeways from the SW and west converge at this boundary, at Willingford, Sandyway, Span Head and Mole's Chamber. Routeways follow the western boundary of the Forest and routeways lead to Badgworthy which is on the Forest boundary; at Alderman's Barrow several routeways run just to the NW of the 14th-century boundary. The eastern boundary dates from c 1400 and routeways converge on this at Red Stone Gate, Lanacre Bridge and Lanacre Gate.

The Forest Courts

As well as the relationship of the routeways with the changing boundary of the Royal Forest, there are several places within the Royal Forest which were significant from at least as early as the 13th century. MacDermot argues that Exmoor's Forest courts date from this time:

'[The] Court of Swainmote of the Forest of Exmore [was a court that] 'all the Freeholders within and around the ancient forest, who had rights of common on the moor, owed suit; and the bordering townships also were represented at it by their tithing men and a certain number of inhabitants, in most cases four. Hence it bears marks of a very ancient origin, and must certainly have been in existence in the thirteenth century, when there was evidently a similar court for the Forest of Mendip.'

(MacDermot 1973, 75)

Every year two courts were held: the first at Lanacre and the second at Hawkridge. The latter met at Hawkridge churchyard, then adjourned to Withypool (Fig 61). The site of the court at Lanacre has been located to Court Hams, an area on the north bank of the River Barle, close to Lanacre Bridge. Recent survey work has identified two enclosures at Bradimoor, which is adjacent to Court Hams (R Wilson-North pers comm) (Fig 62). Both are overlain by ridge and furrow ploughing; one appears to be a

later prehistoric enclosed settlement, the second could well date from the early medieval period and be associated with the administration of the Royal Forest at this time.



Fig 61 Hawkridge Church and churchyard
(Hazel Riley)



Fig 60 Exmoor Royal Forest boundaries and routeways

Bradimoor was also an important place as the annual sheep drift began here. Nine days before midsummer the forester and the free suitors gathered at Whicombes Head, identified as Wincombe Head on Bradimoor (MacDermot 1973, 212), and rode off into the forest to round up all unshorn sheep. They were driven to the Forest pound on the south bank of the River Barle at Withypool. Several routeways are associated with these places and field evidence suggests that the routeways are of considerable antiquity. A series of hollow ways run from Lanacre Gate towards Lanacre Bridge: these are clearly older than the field systems which cover the northern slopes of Kingsland Pits (Figs 63 & 64). Braided hollow ways at Sellbed Cross above Pennycombe Water show the importance of ways from the Exe Valley to the Royal Forest via Lanacre Bridge or Bradimoor, where hollow ways and tracks skirt the northern edge of the medieval enclosure (Fig 65).

The drift for horses also started at Wincombe Head, while the assembly for cattle drifts was at 'Stonehouse Yeate'. According to John Beare, a free suitor of Withypool, who was born in 1539:

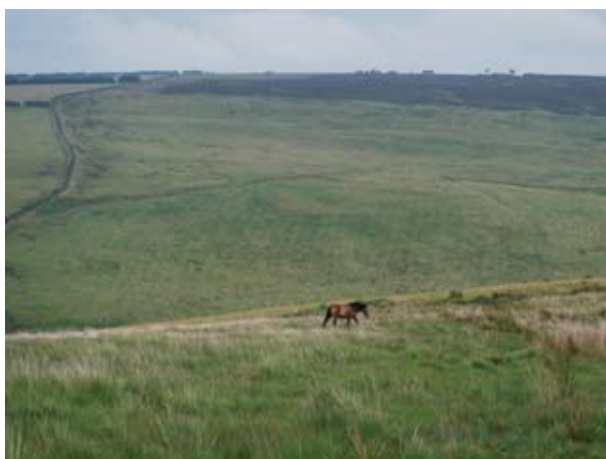


Fig 62 Bradimoor: the two enclosures lie below the tracks and above the Exmoor pony; the hedge on the left marks the Forest boundary, Wincombe Head is at the top right (Hazel Riley)

Fig 63 (below) Hollow ways from Lanacre Gate to Lanacre Bridge (bottom left) are overlain by relict field systems (NMR 27679/035) (© Historic England Archive)



'When a praye or drift of bullocks is to be made within the said Forest then warning is to be given over night to every of the said suitors to be present by one of the clock the next morning at Stonehouse Yeate to attend the Forester or his deputy for the performance of the said drift or praye, wherein they spend the time until about eight or nine of the clock in the forenoon of each day' (MacDermot 1973, 213).

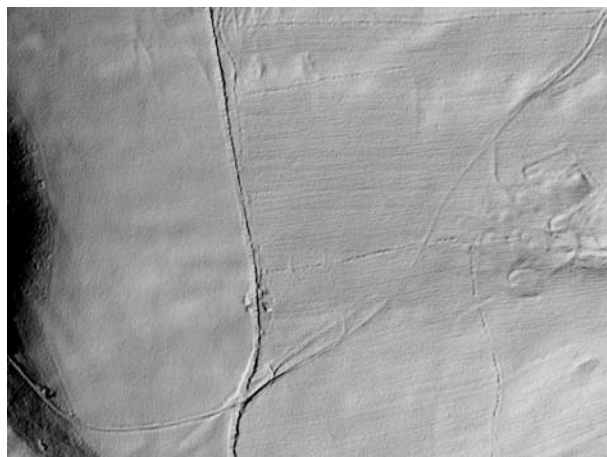
Stonehouse Yeate was not located by MacDermot who suggested that, as there were no houses in the Forest at this time, this may be in the village of Withypool. 'Yeate' is an old word for gate, suggesting the assembly place for the cattle drifts was at a location where routeways led from the commons to the Forest boundary or from enclosed land onto the commons. Combe Gate, just to the west of Withypool, may be where the medieval cattle drifts started from.

Routeways and telling houses

Exmoor Forest has been used for summer pasture – for cattle, sheep and horses – for many hundreds of years. There are references to the practice in 13th-century documents relating to the administration of Exmoor Forest; a reference from the Domesday entry for Molland indicates that the practice of pasturing cattle on Exmoor had been in existence well before the 11th century. The animals came from Devon and Somerset in some quantity. An estimate of numbers at the end of the 16th century gave 40 000 sheep, 1000 cattle and 400 horses; actual numbers in 1736 were 30 136 sheep, 127 bullocks and 102 colts (MacDermot 1973, 210). Sheep were put onto the Forest in the spring and kept there until shearing time when their owners brought them home; tellers, appointed by the forester, counted and recorded all the outgoing sheep, any not previously booked were charged at double the going rate. William Brayley of Swimbridge near Barnstaple, giving evidence in 1657, said that 'There is a place called 'the Spann' where he did usually drive his sheep in and out of the forest, and there is one appointed at the shearing time by the Farmers and Agents to tell sheep and other cattle' (MacDermot 1973, 330).

Fig 64 (below left) A hollow way at Kingsland Pits is now a shallow, reed filled hollow (1 m scale) (Hazel Riley)

Fig 65 (below right) Lidar image showing tracks and hollow ways and the enclosures at Bradimoor (© Geomatics)



According to MacDermot, at least one teller was stationed at Span Head, on North Molton Common, where the remains of a turf shelter – a telling house – could be seen within living memory, and there is a vague tradition that there used to be a telling house at Mole’s Chamber (MacDermot 1973, 212). The OS map of 1804 for Barnstaple shows a telling house at Yarde Cross Down; the neighbouring sheet (North Molton) marks a turf house at a similar location (Fig 66). An 18th-century county map of Somerset marks a telling house close to a track between Mole’s Chamber and Great Vintcombe (Fig 67). Hazel Eardley-Wilmot suggests that a telling house once stood at Gammon Corner and notes rumours of one at Redstone. She also records that Richard Locke, writing in the late 18th century, said there was a telling house ‘in Exford, half a mile from the church’ (Eardley-Wilmot 1990,27). A recent publication has suggested that earthworks of an enclosure, recorded from air photographs, are related to a telling house at Alderman’s Barrow (Hegarty and Wilson-North 2014). Fieldworkers have suggested that the remains of telling houses can be found on Great Vintcombe (Burton 1989, 34) and between Span Head and Yarde Cross Down (Eardley-Wilmot 1981).



Fig 66 (below) Extracts from the 1804 OS maps of Barnstaple (top) and North Molton (bottom) showing a Telling House and Turf House near Yarde Cross (bl.ac.uk)

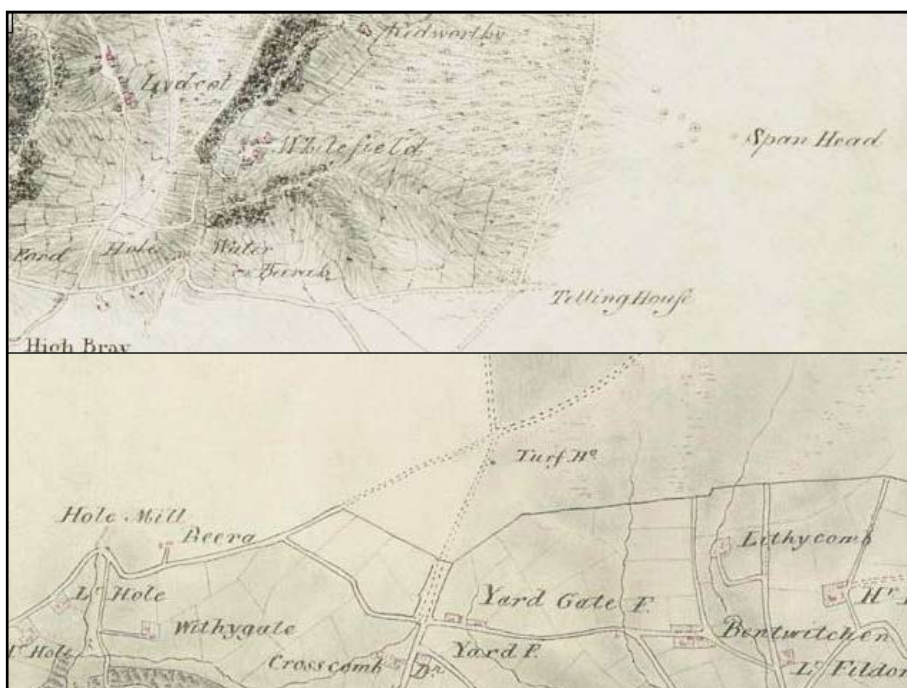


Fig 67 (left) Extract from 1782 map of Somerset showing Telling House NE of Moles Chamber (Somerset Record Society 1981) (South West Heritage Trust: Somerset Archives and Local Studies)

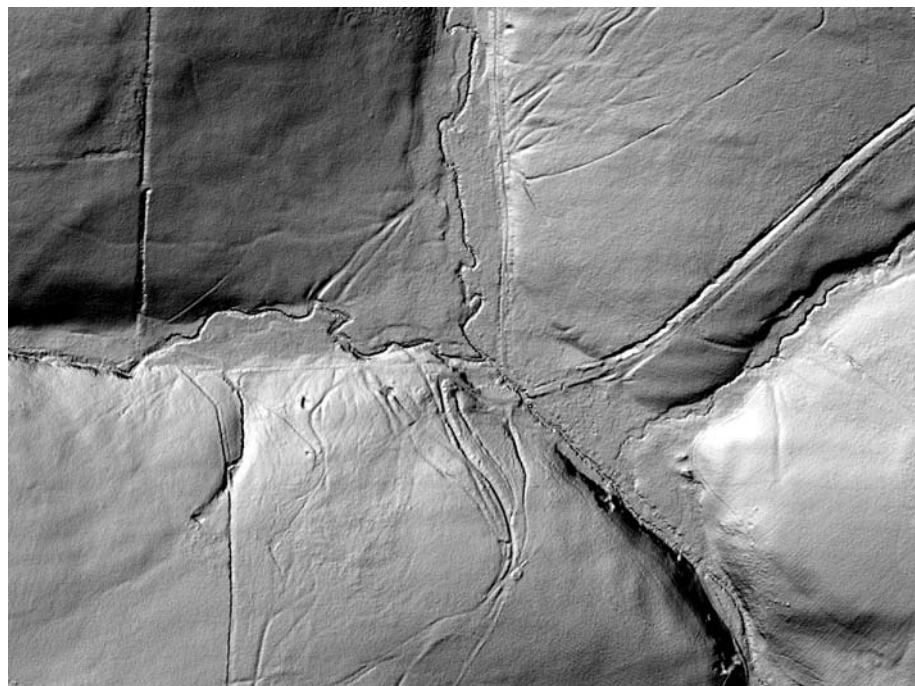
The distribution of extant routeways around the Forest boundary (1400-1819) can also be used as a clue as to the location of telling-houses or places where animals were driven into and out of the Forest and needed to be accounted for. Figure 60 indicates several such sites: at Willingford; Sandyway Cross; Span Head; the Horsehead Stone; Mole's Chamber; Tom's Hill; Alderman's Barrow; Redstone Gate, and Lanacre Gate. The remains of structures have been located at Willingford and to the north of Alderman's Barrow.

A number of hollow ways run to the Forest boundary at Upper Willingford Corner. The earthwork remains of a small structure lie within these hollow ways and much of the complex is overlain by relict field systems (Fig 68). The earthwork comprises a sub-rectangular platform, 15m NE/SW, 10m NW/SE and 0.8m high. A bank, 0.8m high, lies on top of the platform (Figs 69 & 70). There are no buildings depicted on historic maps of the area. This earthwork is interpreted as a building platform, probably connected with the administration of the Royal Forest and dating to the medieval period (Chronology).

Fig 68 (below) Lidar image showing routeways south of Upper Willingford Corner (© Geomatics)



Fig 70 (right) The building platform south of Upper Willingford Corner, 1m scale (Hazel Riley)



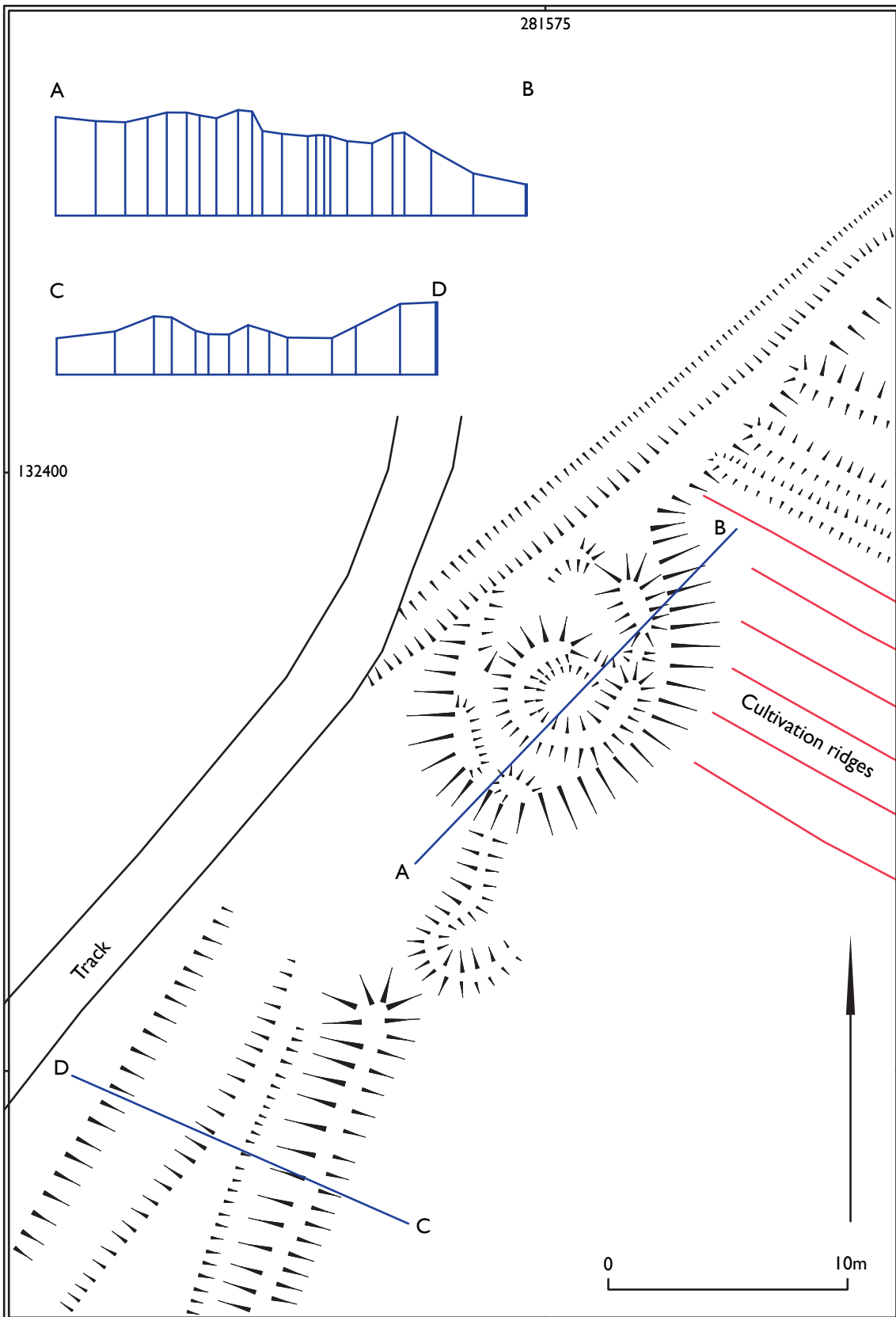


Fig 69 Plan and section of the structure south of Upper Willingford Corner

A similar, smaller structure lies between two routeways just top the north of Alderman's Barrow. It comprises a platform of stone and earth, some 7m square and 0.3m high. A hollow 3.8m long, 1.6m wide and 0.5m deep lies in the centre of the platform. This is interpreted as a building platform, probably connected with the administration of the Royal Forest and dating to the medieval period (Fig 71).

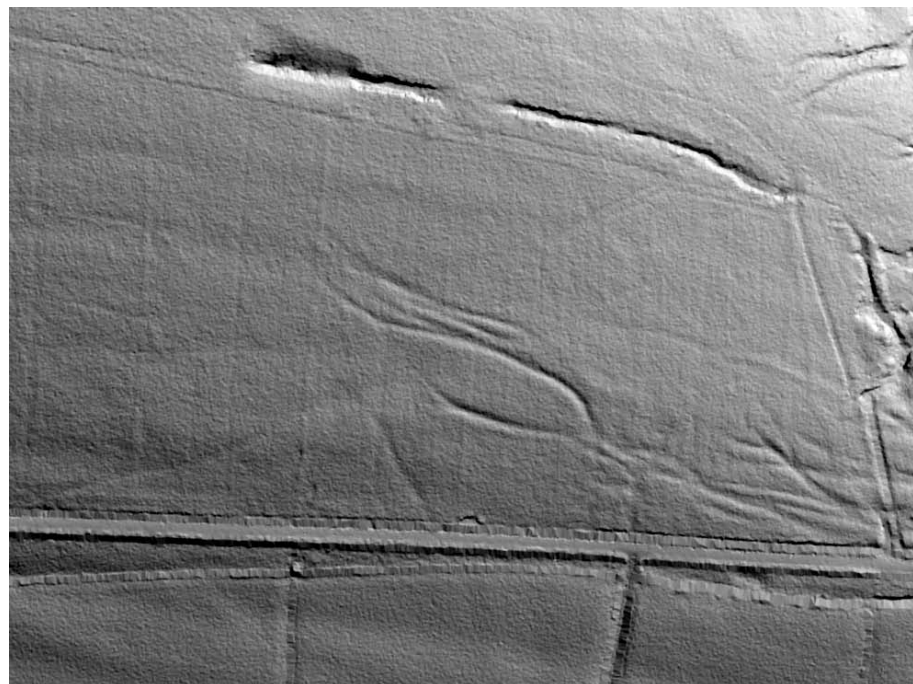
A possible structure visible on the Lidar image at Red Stone Gate is associated with several phases of routeways (Fig 72). It is very overgrown with gorse and merits further investigation. The routeways at Span Head are extensive and this area would seem to be the best candidate for MacDermot's telling house at Span (Figs 73 & 74).

A large building platform, surrounded by a ditch, on the northern boundary of the Forest, NW of Brendon Two Gates, could also be interpreted as a building platform, probably connected with the administration of the Royal Forest and dating to the medieval period. It is similar in form and size to the structure at Willingford and its

Fig 71 Structure between two routeways, north of Alderman's Barrow, 1m scale (Hazel Riley)



Fig 72 Lidar image showing routeways and possible structure at Red Stone Gate (far right) (© Geomatics)



northern edge is overlain by the 19th-century enclosure bank (Fig 75). Although no routeways enter the Forest at this point, the remains of some hollow ways on the NE side of Exe Plain and at Exe Head are oriented towards Brendon Two Gates.

EXMOOR'S HINTERLAND AND ANCIENT ROUTEWAYS

Exmoor's hinterland is defined here as the area extending to the west as far as Bideford, Barnstaple and the Taw Valley; to the south as far as Crediton and Exeter; to the SE and east as far as the Exe Valley, Tiverton, Taunton and Bridgwater (Fig 76).

Market towns

By the beginning of the 16th century, England was no longer a country of fully self-supporting rural communities. A number of fairs and markets in the West Country, such as at Gloucester and Bristol, can be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon period, and many market towns are recorded in Domesday. The normal place of sale and purchase for most country people was the market town: in England, between 1500-1640, there were 760 market towns, each with an official weekly market day or days and fairs held twice a year. Most of these originated in the 12th and 13th centuries (Everitt 1967, 66-67). The market town was the centre of trade and focus of rural life. Until the 16th century, most markets served the local area with all sorts of commodities, with little in the way of specialization. By the later 17th century a broad pattern of specialization can be seen. In the west of England about 55 of the 170 market towns had specialized markets. Twenty



Fig 73 (top left) Multiple hollow ways at Span Head (Hazel Riley)



Fig 74 (above) Detail of hollow way at Span Head (Hazel Riley)

Fig 75 (left) Building platform NW of Brendon Two Gates (Hazel Riley)



Fig 76 The study area and its hinterland: market towns and ports

two of these were for cattle; wool, yarn and cloth were also important (Everitt 1967, 490-493). Hooker, in the mid-16th century, wrote that virtually every town in Devon was a market for kerseys, wool or yarn (Blake 1915, 346).

For the study area and its hinterland, specialized markets in the 16th and 17th centuries grew up at the larger market towns. There was a corn market at Crediton; cattle markets at Barnstaple, Dunster, Bridgwater and Taunton; wool and yarn markets at Crediton and Exeter, and cloth markets at Crediton, Exeter and Taunton (Everitt 1967).

Recent research for the Victoria County History of Somerset has given details about who used the market at Dunster. In the late 16th century, a Minehead tanner and a Dulverton chapman (trader or merchant) paid for standings in the shambles; fish came from Minehead and Carhampton, grain from Exford and Nettlecombe, and bread from Cleeve, Stogumber and Milverton. Welsh or Irish cattle imported through South Wales were brought to Dunster in the early 17th century. Local women bought their own butter to sell: in 1675 an innkeeper found one of his own napkins covering a Withycombe woman's butter in the market. Grain was an important commodity at Dunster. In 1604 men from North and South Molton and Twitchen were caught buying grain for resale at the market. People travelled some distance to the market: in 1618-19 there were clothiers from Stogumber, traders from Stogursey, Sampford Brett and Taunton, and a chapman from as far afield as Bodmin (Siraut 2009, 51, 52). Three people were licensed as badgers or itinerant traders in Minehead between 1712 and 1717 (Siraut nd, 10).

Ports and harbours

In the 16th century, Barnstaple was the most important of the North Devon and West Somerset ports, with occasional cargoes from London and trade with South Wales and Bristol. The port of Bristol was the main distribution centre, taking goods such as wine, iron, soap, alum, teasels and dyestuffs, dried fruits, drywares and mercery, haberdashery and grocery wares to the West Country ports, especially Bridgwater and Barnstaple, and receiving iron, oil and wine. Ports in South Wales sent wool and cloth to Barnstaple, receiving wine, iron, linen, soap and other goods; Ilfracombe sent similar goods to Carmarthen and Tenby (Willan 1976, 38-39).

Smaller ports at Combe Martin, Lynmouth and Porlock Weir served the local fishing and agricultural communities. In the 19th century, Lynmouth imported cargoes of coal, limestone, barrels of ale, oil, groceries, boots and shoes, fertilizers, peat-moss litter for stables, bricks, tiles and bath stone, and exported oak bark for the tanning industry and bags of oats (Boyle and Payne 1952, 220).

The routeways which run from the SW across Fyldon Common and Hangle Cleave to Simonsbath and across North Molton Common to Sandyway are part of direct routes between Barnstaple and its hinterland and the West Somerset coast with its markets at Minehead, Dunster and Watchet. The ridgeway from Exford across the Brendon Hills and the Quantock Hills is the most direct route from Barnstaple and its hinterland to Bridgwater.

North/south routes between Minehead and Dunster via the market towns of Dulverton and Bampton to the large markets at Tiverton and Exeter now form part of the modern road network, but these routes were well established by the 15th century. John Godde, bailiff to the manor of Porlock, travelled to Exeter and Topsham on horseback to buy wine (Chadwyck Healey 1901, 262). The main north/south route along the western edge of Exmoor linked Lynmouth and the moorland edge farms with South Molton and Barnstaple. The modern road network runs as far as Mole's Chamber to the south and Shallowford to the north but most of this route can be seen as hollow ways and tracks along the Forest boundary and was used in the 18th and 19th centuries (Day and Masters 1782; Greenwood 1822).

THE CHRONOLOGY AND ORIGINS OF EXMOOR'S ANCIENT ROUTEWAYS

There are no absolute dates for any of Exmoor's ancient routeways, but several strands of evidence, from excavations, relationships with other archaeological sites, and from historic maps and documents, combine to suggest the date range for the routeways.

Excavations

Excavations of hollow ways in advance of a pipeline provided no absolute dating evidence. The only artefact recovered was a piece of iron horseshoe was the only artefact recovered from the surface of a hollow way north of Parracombe (Whitton 2000).

Medieval settlements

The routeway NE of Barton Town identified from air photographs (Exmoor HER 2049) is an exceptional survival of a medieval feature which seems to mark the northern boundary of the original ring-fenced holding, taken in from the waste or open moorland, of Barton Town (Fig 77). As such it is one of the earliest historic features in

Fig 77 Extract from the tithe map for Challacombe 1840. The routeway runs NE from the church in Barton town (Reproduced with the kind permission of Devon Archives and Local Studies Service)



this landscape, perhaps pre-Conquest in origin, given that Challacombe is a Domesday manor. The hollow way is clearly much earlier than the enclosures marked on both the tithe map of Challacombe (1840) and the 1804 OS map (Barnstaple bl.ac.uk) (Figs 78 & 79).

The settlements in the parish of Challacombe were surrounded by common land and a network of lanes and tracks fan out from the hamlets and farms up onto the commons. Many of the settlements were in existence by the early medieval period: Challacombe, Radworthy, Wallover and Whitefield are mentioned in Domesday; Goat Combe and Swincombe are in existence by the early 14th century (Gower *et al* 1931, 60-61). By the 19th century this pattern is clearly shown on the tithe map for the parish, where five commons are shown: Challacombe North Common; North Regis Common; Challacombe South Common and Lee Ball (Challacombe tithe map 1840). The ways onto the common are therefore of considerable age, in existence from as early as the 11th century. Some have become part of the modern network of lanes and farm tracks



Fig 78 (below) Medieval boundary and routeway overlain by post-medieval field boundaries (Hazel Riley)

Fig 79 (left) Post-medieval enclosures at Challacombe shown on 1804 map (bl.ac.uk)



around the parish; many, such as South Lane, which led from Challacombe to South Regis Common, are green lanes or paths (Figs 80 & 81)

A routeway which leads from the shrunken settlement at Codsend to the Exford road is also of some considerable age. The name, Holloway Lane, marked on 19th-century maps, suggests that it was a landscape feature considered to be of great antiquity in the 18th and 19th centuries. Codsend, a settlement with at least four farmsteads by the 18th century, was established by 1327 (Aston 1983; Dennison 1985). The OS map of 1802 shows that Holloway Lane was the main route which linked the hamlet of Codsend to the Exford road. By the late 19th century Codsend has become a single farm and Holloway Lane is reduced to a minor track or path (Figs 82 & 83). Routeways are also associated with deserted medieval settlements: at Ley Hill, south of Porlock, excavations of two of the buildings showed that the settlement was probably deserted by the end of the 14th century (Richardson 1999; Thackray 2001). Hollow ways run from Ley Hill down to the settlement, where the buildings are grouped around it



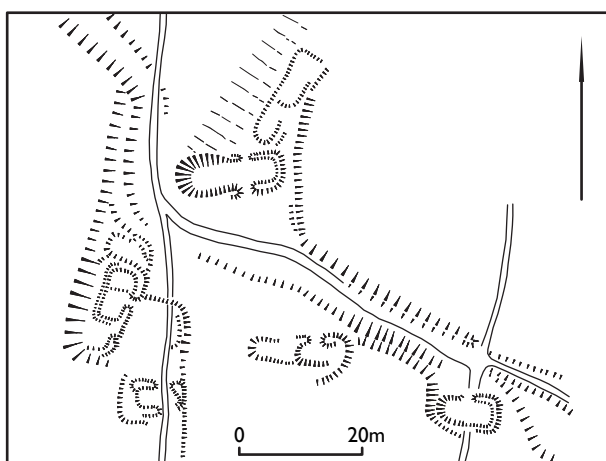
Fig 80 (right)
Challacombe
tithe map 1840:
routes to the
five commons
(Reproduced
with the kind
permission of
Devon Archives
and Local Studies
Service)

Fig 81 (top right)
South Lane,
Challacombe
(Hazel Riley)
Fig 82 (top)
Holloway Lane
in early 19th
century (bl.ac.uk)



(Wilson-North 1997) (Figs 84 & 85). The route, which passes through the settlement, is marked on a late 18th-county map of Somerset (Day and Masters 1782). This evidence can be interpreted in a number of ways: the way that the hollow way enters the settlement and changes its course to run along the western edge of Building 4 suggests that the route is later than this building; alternatively the settlement may have grown up around a route which was already in existence. The evidence does indicate that the route across Ley Hill was in existence by c 1200, and that the route continued to be used throughout the medieval and post medieval periods, after the settlement had fallen into disuse. On Cheriton Ridge a deserted settlement similar in size and layout to the one on Ley Hill lies directly opposite an area of braided hollow ways which lead down Furzehill Common to a ford over Hoarok Water (Fig 86). These routes linked the settlement on Cheriton Ridge with the farms and hamlets at Furzehill and Ilkerton. As at Ley Hill, the routes are probably at least as early as c 1200, and may have continued until c 1500; they had fallen into disuse by the end of the 18th century, when one was used as the boundary for the post medieval holding at Hoarok Cottage (Riley 2013b).

Figs 83 (below) Holloway Lane at Codsend (Hazel Riley) Fig 84 (bottom) Plan of routeway and deserted medieval settlement at Ley Hill (after Wilson-North 1997, fig 4) Fig 85 (below right) Hollow way through the deserted medieval settlement on Ley Hill 1m scale on one of the buildings (Hazel Riley) Fig 86 (bottom right) Hollow ways leading from Furzehill to the deserted medieval settlement on Cheriton Ridge (Hazel Riley)



Relict field systems

In all cases where field investigation has established a relationship between relict systems and routeways, the routeways are earlier features in the landscape than the relict field systems. The relict field systems do not have absolute dates but they represent the latest phases of periodic cultivation of the commons which has occurred from the medieval period until the 18th century.

Periodic cultivation of the commons for an arable crop is mentioned in the Exmoor Grievances of 1279. The Rolls of the Swainmote Court for 1541 give details of this practice: 'Richard Allen, Robert Venner, Peter Reynell, Roger Reynell, Robert Wade and John Hundell, all of Withypool, entered Withypool Common with an ox and plough and turned and put to tillage 7 acres' (MacDermot 1973, 446-447). In 1678, Nicholas Snowe stated that tithes of corn and grain grown on Exford and Porlock commons had always been paid to the rectors of the parishes; 6d an acre was paid to the Lord of the Manor for enclosing and ploughing parts of the commons, and George Gulley of Withypool said that parts of Withypool Common had been recently tilled and there were signs that several other parts now laid down had been anciently tilled (Mac Dermot 1973, 352, 362). Eighteenth-century leases for Molland record properties at Pullworthy and Gourte with the rights to cultivate common on Molland Moor at the rate of 6d an acre (NDRO Molland 50/11/25/15; 50/11/26/12; 50/11/26/30). These dates agree with the evidence for cultivation of commons on other moors in Devon and Somerset. On Dartmoor, Andrew Fleming has identified relict field systems on the commons with 16th and 17th century dates, and on the Quantock Hills widespread cultivation of the commons has been dated to between the 15th and late 17th centuries (Fleming 1994; Riley 2006, 127-131).

Examples of routeways which are overlain by relict field systems occur in the SE of the study area: on Molland Common; between Upper Willingford Bridge and White Post; on Bradimoor and Kingsland Pits, Ashway Side and Bye Common (Figs 63 & 87).



Fig 87 Cultivation ridges running over the bank on the side of a hollow way, Willingford (Hazel Riley)

Industrial and other sites

Relationships of routeways to several different types of industrial sites also indicate a medieval date for Exmoor's routeways (above, Industrial sites). Around the edges of the former Royal Forest, disused quarries cut through hollow ways both on Wallover Common and north and SW of Mole's Chamber. A post-medieval leat, supplying water to Lyshwell Farm, blocks a hollow way at Red Ford on Molland Common and 19th-century enclosure banks clearly overlie hollow ways at the Chapman Barrows (Figs 88 & 89). Within the former Royal Forest many examples of 19th-century enclosures blocking hollow ways can be seen, particularly as routes approach Simonsbath (Fig 4).

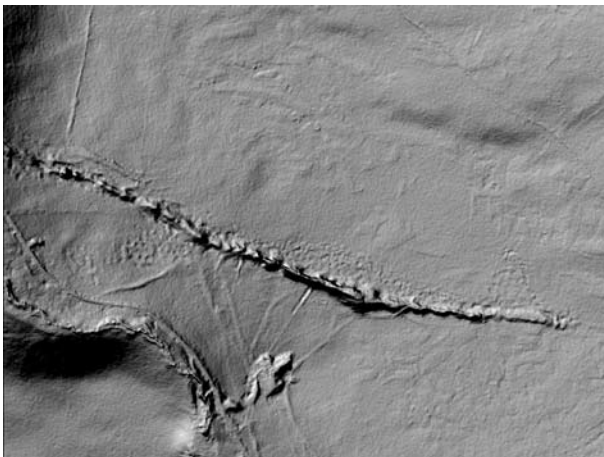
The relationship of several hollow ways to iron extraction sites which can be dated either absolutely from documentary evidence or by reference to their morphology, is one of the most important indicators of the age of some of the routeways in the former Royal Forest. At Roman Lode, SW of Simonsbath, where iron extraction was carried out in the Bronze Age, Iron Age and medieval periods, hollow ways are cut by the massive openwork (Fig 90), showing that these routeways could well be of considerable antiquity. At Hangley Cleave, SW of Roman Lode, hollow ways are cut by 19th-century adits and a by an openwork which may have its origins in the medieval period, again demonstrating the antiquity of the routeways in the former Royal Forest (Fig 54).



Fig 88 (left) Leat supplying Lyshwell Farm blocking a hollow way at Red Ford, Molland Common (Hazel Riley)

Fig 89 (below right) Hollow ways cut by 19th-century enclosure bank, Challacombe Common (Hazel Riley)

Fig 90 (below left) Lidar image showing hollow ways cut by the Roman Lode openwork (© Geomatics)



Documentary evidence

The 18th and 19th century county maps for the Devon part of the study area illustrate that the coastal and inland commons around Parracombe, Martinhoe and Lynmouth were still unenclosed at this time; between Coles Cross and Moles Chamber no roads or tracks are shown on the SW side of the Forest boundary, and there are no routes east from Challacombe (Donn 1765; Greenwood 1827) (Fig 91).

The main N/S route along the western edge of Exmoor linked Lynmouth and the moorland edge farms with South Molton and Barnstaple. Much of this route can be seen as hollow ways along the Forest boundary. It is marked on 18th- and 19th-century county and parish maps and is mentioned in an account of a journey by packhorse from Barnstaple to Ley, west of Lynmouth, which took place in the summer of 1628 (Day and Masters 1782; Greenwood 1822; Challacombe tithe map 1840; Chanter 1906b, 175-176) (Fig 92).

The inclosure map and award for Exmoor Forest (1818) (Fig 93) shows the routes across the Royal Forest at the beginning of the 19th century. Some of these routes are now metalled roads but several are now marked by hollow ways (Fig 94). The descriptions, giving the widths of the routes as 40-60 feet, suggest that the routes were well established at this time:

Fig 91 (left) Donn's 1765 map of Devon: Parracombe, Challacombe & W edge of Royal Forest (Reproduced with the kind permission of Devon Archives & Local Studies Service)
Fig 92 (below) Route from South Molton to Lynmouth between Saddlestone and Wood Barrow shown on Challacombe 1840 tithe map (Reproduced with the kind permission of Devon Archives & Local Studies Service)
Fig 93 (below left) Cover of Inclosure Award for Exmoor Forest 1818 (Q\RDc 140) (South West Heritage Trust: Somerset Archives & Local Studies)



'No I The Barnstaple and Exford Road

One public carriage road and bridleway of the breadth of sixty feet leading from Barnstaple to Exford commencing on the Forest at Fildon Ridge on the west of Two Barrows and passing in or near its present track to the River Barle and Cloven Rocks then continuing over Honeymead in a straight line to Honeymead Corner near to which it enters the parish of Exford.'

(SRO Q\Rde 140 Inclosure map and award for Exmoor Forest 1818)

The remains of this route are clearly visible as the earthwork remains of braided hollow ways leading up to the Forest boundary between Five Barrows Cross and Span Head, crossing Kinsford Water SW of Emmett's Grange, and the NW edge of Deer Park, where the routeways are cut by post medieval and 19th-century mine workings. Numerous hollow ways on Mount Pleasant (Fig 4), SW of Simonsbath Bridge, led to a fording point of the river Barle some 100m below the stone bridge, and now marked by some very large quartz blocks with iron fixings on them (information from R Wilson-North); NE of the river, hollow ways run through Birch Cleave.

Other earthwork remains of routes named on this map can be seen north of Alderman's Barrow; on Hangley Cleave, on the western edge of the Forest boundary, at Sandyway Cross and along one of the 'public bridle roads' described as:

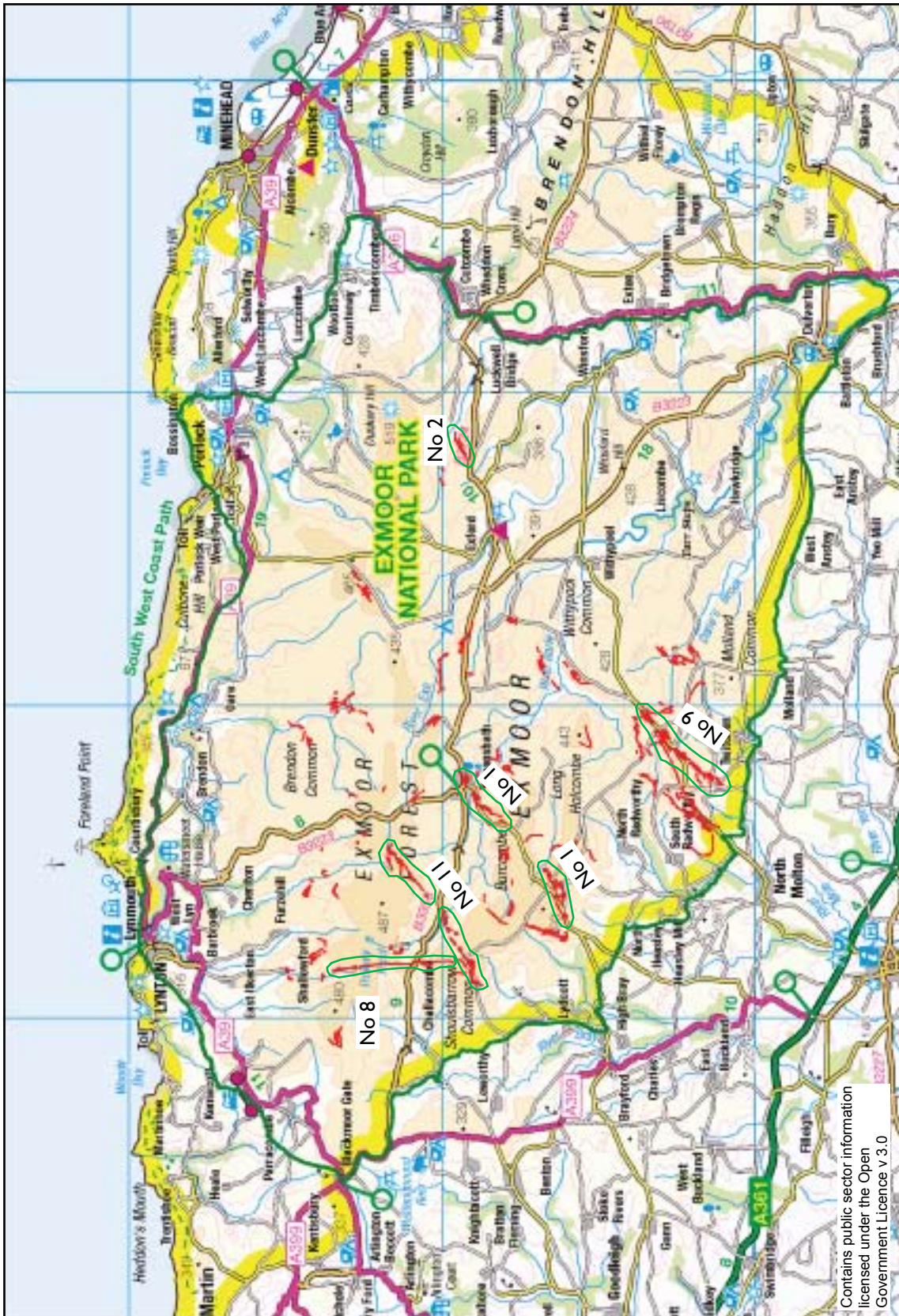
'No 11 One public bridle road of the breadth of six feet which commences at or near a place called Moule's Chamber on the said Forest and extending in its present track by the foot of Black Hill and over the side of Great Vintcombe Hill to the River Barle where it enters His Majesty's Allotment and from thence into the public carriage road called the Challacombe Road at the foot of Goat Hill crossing that road and continuing in its present track by the foot of a hill called Driver and over Hearlake and Titchcombe Hills into the Linton Road at Exe Head passing by Black Pits over Exe Plain and Hoar Tor terminates at the entrance of the Brendon Road against Brendon Common.'

(SRO Q\Rde 140 Inclosure map and award for Exmoor Forest 1818)

Some of the best examples of extant routeways, in the form of braided hollow ways, can be seen along most of the SW section of this route at Exe Cleave, on Great Vintcombe and on Black Hill (Figs 3, 27, 28).

The archaeological and the documentary evidence both strongly suggest that the extant routeways on and approaching the former Royal Forest are of considerable antiquity. Archaeological evidence shows that the routes pre-date 18th- and 19th-century enclosure and medieval/early post-medieval iron mining. There is also evidence to show that the routes pre-date many of the relict field systems on the commons around Exmoor Forest, suggesting that the routes were in use during the medieval period.

Documentary evidence shows that many of the routes continued to be used into the post-medieval period, and that routes across and around the former Royal Forest were important enough to be included as public carriage roads or bridle roads at the beginning of the 19th century.



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Fig 94 Routeways named as public roads and bridle roads on the 1818 inclosure map

Origins

The historical evidence which links Exmoor's ancient routeways with packhorse roads relates to the later medieval and post-medieval periods, as market towns became more specialized and the North Devon and West Somerset ports increased in importance. The morphology of the routeways which are preserved in and around the former Royal Forest together with their place in the historic landscape, suggest a different explanation should be sought for their origins.

Exmoor Forest has been used for summer pasture for hundreds of years (Fig 95). A law suit from 1617 states that the forest was: 'a large ground, many thousand acres in extent and 30 miles round at the least, time out of mind used for the pasture of great numbers of sheep, cattle and horse beasts' (MacDermot 1973, 7).

Documentary evidence confirms the antiquity of this practice. The Domesday entry for Molland suggests that it dates back to before the Norman Conquest: 'To the manor called Mollanda belongs the third penny of the hundreds of North Molton, Bampton



Fig 95 Cattle at Lanacombe Gate, August 2014 (Hazel Riley)

Fig 96 Hollow way above Whitefield Down and Sherracombe (Hazel Riley)



and Braunton, and the third animal of the pasture of the moors' (MacDermot 1973, 5). Profit from 'herbage of the said Forest of Exmore' is mentioned in several 13th-century documents relating to the administration of the Royal Forest. Numbers of beasts out on the Forest at the end of the 16th century are given as 40 000 sheep, 1000 cattle and 450 horses. In 1736 the numbers recorded in the Forest Books were 30 136 sheep, 127 bullocks and 102 horses (MacDermot 1973, 210). The 18th-century Forest Books also give details of where sheep from particular parishes in North Devon and West Somerset were pastured on the Forest during the summer. For example: sheep from Bishops Tawton, Chittlehampton, East Buckland, Landkey, South Molton, Swimbridge, Tawstock and Warkleigh were taken to Ashcombe; sheep from Bishops Tawton, Chittlehampton, Landkey, South Molton, Stoke Rivers, Swimbridge, Tawstock and West Buckland were taken to Duredon (Burton 1989, 257-261).

The distribution of routeways on the SW side of Exmoor echoes this movement of animals and people from the Barnstaple and South Molton areas across North Devon up onto particular places on Exmoor for many hundreds of years (Fig 96). The routes up to the Royal Forest and then into the heart of the grazing areas must have been made by generations of North Devon and West Somerset stockmen and their beasts.

The results of recent palaeoenvironmental analysis support this idea. Detailed palaeoecological work on Ricksy Ball, which represents analysis of one of the most diverse sets of environmental indicators from Exmoor, has allowed for a richer characterisation of both site and landscape level environmental change in the 1st millennium AD (Fyfe *et al* 2014, 10). Early in the 1st millennium AD several changes in these datasets occur: a sharp decline in hazel; the short-lived establishment of local alder woodland; an increase in grassland, and a dramatic increase in the rate of the growth of peat. This is most likely to be the result of a change in landuse, based around the clearance of hazel woodland. Similar results from other parts of the former Royal Forest suggest that this is part of a wider event rather than local hydrological change. This suggests the onset of significant amounts of grazing in the former Royal Forest in the early 1st millennium BC. The stocking levels from figures for the later 16th century and from the Forest Books for 1736 suggest that the numbers of grazing animals in the post-medieval period were enough to sustain this ecological change (Fyfe *et al* 2014, 10-11).

A recent study of the pastoral tradition on Dartmoor (Fox 2012) concluded that the tradition of summer pasture on Dartmoor, particularly cattle, goes back to at least as early as the post-Roman period. Fox saw it as an important factor in the development of early settlements around Dartmoor, for example the concentration of 'worthy' place names on the moorland edge. He also noted place-names associated with dairying out on Dartmoor, like Butter Hill, some distance away from any farmsteads and argued that the movement of cattle, including the cows, from the pastures at the farm in the spring was an important part of the agricultural economy, allowing hay to be made and pastures to recover from the depredations of the wet Devon winters. This practice of dairying away from the farmstead is documented in Scotland and Ireland in the 18th and 19th centuries (O'Dubhthaigh 1983; Stewart 2010).

There was certainly dairying taking place on Exmoor in the 17th century: Richard Hill, who owned pack saddles and crooks in Simonsbath in 1694, also owned an old cheese press and four cheese vats (Burton 1989, 40-41). John Leland suggests that there were cows on the moor in the 16th century: 'From Exford to Simonsbath Bridge 4 miles, all by Forest, Barren and Moorish ground, where is store and breeding of young cattle, but little or no corn or habitation' (Bates 1887, 99).

Place-name evidence also goes some way to support a similar model of the development of grazing on Exmoor, although the main body of work on place-names for Devon was carried out in the early years of the 20th century and work is still in progress for Somerset (Gower *et al* 1931; uwe.ac.uk Directorate of the Survey of English Place-Names and Somerset Place-Names Project). There is a concentration of 'worthy' place-names between Challacombe and Twitchen, reflecting the distribution of extant routeways on this side of the Forest. Buttery, a farm close to the boundary of the Forest NE of North Radworthy, was Buttewerthie in 1259 (MacDermot 1973, 87); Butter Hill, NW of Saddle Gate, is mentioned in 1593 (Gower *et al* 1931, 65).

Recent research is uncovering landscapes which seem to be associated with the movement of stock up onto Exmoor. In 2014 survey and excavations at Batsworthy Cross, Knowstone, 8kms south of Molland Common, revealed a previously unrecorded medieval building dating from the 11th/12th century, associated with a droveway (devon.gov.uk; wessexarch.co.uk; northdevongazette.co.uk). The lush summer meadows in the valley of the River Barle would certainly be an attraction for stockmen (Fig 97). The suggestion that parts of Exmoor were used for transhumance with a dairying component should certainly be considered in further work both on the development of the moorland edge settlements, and in the interpretation of structures like the two building platforms recently discovered on the edge of the Barle Valley and close to the droveways on Mount Pleasant and Woolcombe (Riley 2013c).



Fig 97 Meadows in the Barle Valley (Hazel Riley)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EXMOOR'S ANCIENT ROUTEWAYS

Exmoor's ancient routeways are significant for a number of reasons. This project has shown that the routeways associated with the former Royal Forest could have their origins in the post-Roman or early medieval period, with links to the development of the Royal Forest as summer pasture and the history of the Forest. This model agrees with the most recent findings from palaeoenvironmental analysis on the former Royal Forest.

The routeways are significant features of the historic landscape which have been used over many hundreds of years. Particularly on the western side of the study area, the routeways hold the key to understanding the development of settlements around the Forest.

A set of exceptional, possibly unique, packhorse gear from an Exmoor farm is preserved at Torquay Museum.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The provenance of the packhorse equipment from Exmoor in Torquay Museum should be researched further at the Torquay Natural History Society and Museum.

The distribution of ancient routeways on Exmoor (Fig 24) clearly shows that there is a lack of survey and recording in Exmoor's woodlands of both routeways and other archaeological features.

Further investigation of possible medieval building remains at Willingford, Alderman's Barrow, Brendon Two Gates and Red Stone Gate is needed.

There has been little recent, detailed work on the place-names of Exmoor.

Research on documents such as inventories and wills could help to clarify the distribution and chronology of packhorse gear, butts, wheels and wains in the later medieval and post-medieval periods.

Little detailed research has been carried out about Exmoor's markets. Where this has been carried out for Dunster a picture of the market and who used it has emerged.

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