

Introduction

Location of the AONB

The Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB) is located in the counties of West Sussex and Hampshire on the southern coast of England (Fig 1).

The AONB forms an irregular area, its boundary following a number of roads and other features, including the harbour mouth, to enclose some 74 sq km. The western boundary of the AONB is marked by the B2179 through West Wittering, along the A286 to Dell Quay where the boundary continues north up Appledram Lane to meet the Chichester By Pass. The A259 constitutes the long northern boundary of the AONB. The boundary turns south down Bath Road, heading west along the coast to rejoin the A259, then turning south at Langstone and crossing the Langstone Bridge. The eastern boundary follows field boundaries and minor roads down the east coast of Hayling Island.

The ‘corners’ of this irregular area are marked by the NGRs 472680 105845, 474475 97505, 484020 100890, and 484230 104605.

The area encompasses a number of small picturesque harbour villages, including Itchenor, Dell Quay, Bosham, Bosham Hoe, Chidham, West Thorney and parts of West Wittering, Fishbourne, Nutbourne, and Prinsted, as well as the major ‘arms’ of Chichester Harbour itself – Emsworth Channel, Thorney Channel, Chichester Channel and Bosham Channel. It includes a broad range of landscapes and seascapes providing continuity from inland areas through marginal land and intertidal ranges to underwater sites in the channels. The Harbour is a recognised archaeological and historical resource as well as a valued natural environment.

Status of the AONB

The status of the AONB was designated by order on 7 July 1963, and this was confirmed by order on 4 February 1964. The AONB is administered by Chichester Harbour Conservancy (CHC) that has a duty under the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Act (1971) to maintain and improve the Harbour and Amenity Area for pleasure craft and other vessels, and to be responsible for nature conservation and the natural beauty of the landscape.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments (‘SAMs’) are archaeological sites of national significance that have statutory protection. Scheduled Monument Consent is required for any works to these sites. There are four SAMs in the AONB. In West Sussex, the south part of Fishbourne Roman Palace falls within the AONB (SAM number WS 233). In Hampshire, Tourner Bury hillfort (SAM number HA 38), Warblington Castle (SAM number HA 98) and the associated Black Barn (SAM number HA 547) are all Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned from the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) by the Chichester Harbour Conservancy (CHC).

This document constitutes the period and thematic study of the Chichester Harbour AONB. The first part of the document is divided into periods covering the past half million years of human activity from the Palaeolithic to the modern period. The second part is divided into themes that represent important aspects of the AONB through time. The themes range from transport and trade, military, fishing and associated industries, ship and boat building, brick making, salt manufacture, to settlement history and place-names. The document is period-led, with detailed information such as SMR identification numbers and national grid references contained in the period descriptions. To avoid unnecessary duplication, the information in the theme descriptions is given in outline only, with references to the relevant period. This leads into the final major section of the document where research themes are discussed and possible practical research projects identified.

Aims of the project

The aims of the project are summarised below. They are to:

- Use the Research Framework to inform the Chichester Harbour Conservancy in its future sustainable management, conservation and enhancement of the Harbour’s heritage.
- Use the Research Framework to promote better understanding and enjoyment, by all age groups, of the rich and diverse heritage within the AONB.
- Identify a series of practical research projects and potential Partners for implementation of these projects.
- Collate the information derived from the Research Framework and ensuing practical projects, to form a central, GIS-based database for the AONB.

Methodology

The eight principal tasks for the Research Framework are set out in summary form in the *Invitation to Tender* (Chichester Harbour Conservancy 2003) Schedule B section 4. These are:

Phase	
1	<i>4.1 Collate existing historical and archaeological knowledge of the Chichester Harbour AONB</i>
2	<i>4.2 Provide geographical data on existing knowledge in a form compatible with Chichester Harbour Conservancy’s existing GIS-based database (Mapinfo)</i>
2	<i>4.3 Produce a Summary of existing historical and archaeological knowledge of the Chichester Harbour AONB</i>
3	<i>4.4 Identify sites/themes of particular importance and gaps in historical and archaeological knowledge of the AONB</i>

3	<i>4.5 Produce a list of research themes relevant to the AONB and an assessment of research priorities</i>
4	<i>4.6 Identify research projects arising from these themes and research priorities</i>
4	<i>4.7 Identify Partners for collaboration on the implementation of research projects</i>
4	<i>4.8 Set out in consultation with Partners the feasibility, broad aims and scope of each project</i>

As part of this process, a steering committee was established (CHARM) to monitor the overall progress of the project. This committee included archaeological advisers from West Sussex County Council, Chichester District Council and English Heritage, as well as Chichester Harbour Conservancy and MoLAS staff.

A larger steering committee (CHASM) was also established to advise on the Research Framework. This committee consisted of the CHARM committee in addition to local experts and representatives of local groups with an interest in the archaeology of the AONB.

A public meeting was also held in March 2004 where interested members of the public were invited to put forward their ideas for research projects and for the ways archaeology could be managed within the AONB.

The report uses Ordnance Survey National Grid References to locate structures and features described in the text.



Fig 1 Location plan showing AONB