

HISTORIC FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT



Historic England

DARTMOOR HISTORIC FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT

This document forms part of the Dartmoor Historic Farmsteads Guidance. This aims to inform and achieve the sustainable development of historic farmsteads, including their conservation and enhancement. It will also be of value to those with an interest in the cultural heritage of Devon and Dartmoor's landscape, settlements and historic buildings. It is based on local research and uses an approach being adopted in other parts of England.

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CONTENTS OF THE DARTMOOR HISTORIC FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE

The Historic Farmsteads Character Statement provides detailed illustrated guidance on Dartmoor's farmsteads and buildings in their landscape context. It is divided into two sections:

1. *Historic Farmsteads Character Statement CS1* which summarises the historic development, landscape context, the range of farmstead layout types and the building materials and detail found across Dartmoor.
2. *Historic Farm Buildings Character Statement CS2* which details the range of farm building types and their significance found across Dartmoor.

The Historic Farmsteads Assessment Framework will help to identify the historic character and significance of a site and its buildings, and to use this to consider key issues at the earliest possible stage when considering change. It is divided into two sections:

1. *Historic Farmsteads Assessment Framework* provides detailed illustrated guidance on the assessment of significance of proposals seeking planning consent.
2. *Research and Recording Guidance* provides research questions and guidance for those involved in the recording of farmsteads and those with an interest in the history and character of Dartmoor's historic farmsteads, landscape and settlements.

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September 2016

HISTORIC FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

A farmstead is the place where the farmhouse and the working buildings of a farm are located, although some farms also have field barns or outfarms sited away from the main steading. Historic farmsteads and their buildings reflect local traditions and national influences, and make a significant contribution to local character and distinctiveness. They do this through variations in their scale, layout, buildings and materials, and the way that buildings of different dates and types relate to yards, other spaces and the surrounding landscape and settlement.

A recent map based investigation into farmsteads locations by DNPA (2013) identified 1100 surviving pre-1919 historic farmsteads and over 200 lost farmsteads on Dartmoor. The surviving historic farmsteads include:

- Buildings of 19th century or earlier date, whether vernacular buildings which display local traditions and styles or designed buildings which display national influences in their architecture or engineering, and
- Locally distinctive pre-1950 buildings, built after 1900. These include late examples of vernacular buildings and examples designed by architects and engineers for estates and county council smallholdings.

It is important to note that percentage figures given for items are extracted from the two phases of detailed farmstead site surveys carried out by the DNPA in 1991 and 2005 which provided information on 658 historic farmsteads. Figures and information given are therefore approximate and extrapolated when related to the currently known total of 1100 farmsteads as not all these are as yet surveyed.

Excluded from this definition of historic buildings are prefabricated and standardised industrial buildings which do not themselves display any distinctive local variation in their architectural character. Under some circumstances they can contribute to the character of historic farmsteads. Occasionally transitional buildings are found which exhibit modern components in an otherwise historic construction. These may also offer additional character depending on their features and rarity.

Site survey and the comparison of historic map regression with modern Ordnance Survey maps will aid the location of historic buildings and later industrial building construction.



This view shows an historic farmstead with the older buildings retained in a now large modern farmyard. The old traditionally constructed buildings are much narrower and smaller than the large sheeted roofs of the modern framed buildings which overwhelm the old buildings and mask the original character of the steading. © Historic England

SUMMARY

HISTORIC CHARACTER

The historic character of farmsteads reflects the human response to settlement and farming on Dartmoor. It exhibits a long history of local tradition and changing culture, and is manifest in the vernacular i.e. the utilisation of materials that were locally available, and the varied forms of buildings and their juxtaposition that developed within their landscape context.

- Historic farmsteads and their buildings are an integral part of the Dartmoor landscape and demonstrate its changes over many centuries. Local character and distinctiveness have been shaped by historical patterns of land use and settlement.
- The predominantly dispersed settlement pattern fringing the **high moor** comprises scattered farmsteads, hamlets and small villages, including a high proportion of medieval or earlier origin, within a landscape of irregular field patterns of medieval and occasionally prehistoric origin. There is a higher density of farmsteads, and of 17th century and earlier recorded buildings, in the more sheltered eastern half.
- Predominant farmstead plan forms comprise small-scale loose courtyards and dispersed plans, sometimes with the farmhouse attached to the working buildings. Some parallel and regular L- and U-shaped plans exist, the latter mostly on larger and high-status farms where full courtyards of one period also feature.
- Farmsteads and farm buildings are typically small in scale. They are mostly sited amidst irregular small fields enclosed from strip field layouts, and often sheltered in valleys. Few historic farmsteads – ancient tenements – exist on the **high moor** and Duchy of Cornwall influence has been significant in the survival of those farms and settlements.
- Essentially granite buildings, once combined with thatch, corrugated iron, or Devon slate roofs, are now found with Cornish slating. Late 19th century buildings are roofed with Welsh or occasionally Cornish slate. Cob and wheat reed thatch are found more often to the east of the granite batholith.
- Historic farmsteads and farm buildings demonstrate the regard taken of site topography and exposure which has shaped characteristic farm building types and their siting in the landscape to achieve sustainable working.

SIGNIFICANCE

Understanding significance is vital for informing change in both planning and conservation terms. An historic building or farmstead will have significance if it makes a contribution to local character and distinctiveness, whether it is a designated or local heritage asset. Only a relatively small proportion of all Dartmoor's surviving historic farm buildings are formally listed for their special architectural or historic interest.

Significant aspects of Dartmoor's historic farmsteads include:

- In common with other English upland areas Dartmoor has an exceptionally high survival of historic farmsteads. This significance is heightened by the fact that the area has an exceptionally high survival of buildings (predominantly farmhouses) of 17th century or earlier date sited within landscapes whose character derives from medieval and prehistoric land use, clearance and enclosure.
- 14th to 17th century longhouses, found across the moor, are the most concentrated on the eastern side, and comprise a nationally-important grouping. Dartmoor's longhouses are internationally important and comprise the highest survival of longhouses, along with Brittany, in northern Europe.
- Dartmoor has a high proportion of 18th century farm buildings, which is rare by national standards.
- The area has a relatively high concentration of thatch for an upland area (shared by Exmoor and to a lesser extent the North York Moors), increasingly replaced in recent decades by water reed with combed wheat thatch becoming more rare.
- Very high incidence of nationally important smoke blackened thatch
- The heritage value of historic farmsteads within the Dartmoor National Park is recognised by 37% of all listed buildings being farmhouses and farm buildings.

The assessment of significance is further explained in stage 2 of the Historic Farmsteads Assessment Framework.

HISTORIC FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT CS1

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Agricultural productivity in England has long been sustained by new techniques in crop and animal husbandry, and the restructuring and enlargement of farm holdings. A key feature of farming history since the medieval period has been the development of local and regional markets, and the development of areas that were mixed in their agriculture or which specialised in the production of corn, the rearing and fattening of cattle, or dairy products.

These developments, and local variations in the prosperity of farming, are often expressed in successive waves of rebuilding of houses, barns and other structures extending into the medieval period. The period 1750-1880, and especially the capital-intensive 'High Farming' years of the 1840's-70's,

saw a particularly sharp increase in productivity, in which the rebuilding of farmsteads played a key role. This was followed by a long but regionally varied depression which lasted until the Second World War. Most new buildings comprised Dutch barns, new forms of pig and poultry housing, hygienic dairies and milking parlours, architectural showpieces built with non-agricultural wealth and County Council smallholdings.

The Second World War witnessed a massive rise in productivity. From the 1950s changing animal welfare standards and increasing use of machinery resulted in the development of multi-purpose pre-fabricated buildings that economise on farm labour and are critical to the modern farming industry.

WITHIN DARTMOOR:

- Since prehistoric times farmers have utilised the moorland for a variety of resources e.g. arable, summer grazing, peat for fuel, bracken for bedding.
- Transhumance for grazing stock on the **high moor** in the summer was part of the agricultural regime including off-moor parishes from probably early medieval times (Fox 2012).
- Relatively early field enclosure and the expansion of settlement onto the moorland occurred from the medieval period onwards. An early medieval infrastructure of boundaries, droveways, strip fields, lynchets and hedge banks, at times based on prehistoric earthworks, was established which is still evident today.
- More intensive mixed farming, with increases in corn production, and including cider production, was particularly concentrated on the eastern and southern fringes than elsewhere on Dartmoor.
- Local exploitation of the area's mineral resources occurred, notably tin and china clay deposits. Granite moorstone was utilised for building whilst slate for roofing came largely from small quarries in the south and west of Dartmoor.
- The quarrying of granite began in the early 19th century. In some cases (into the early 20th century) smallholders combined this with farming.
- Following the decrease from earlier strip farming arable, cultivation expanded considerably from the late 18th century, accompanied by the reorganisation of some fields and farmsteads.
- The period 1750-1880, and especially the 'High Farming' years of the 1840's-70's, saw a particularly sharp increase in productivity, in which the rebuilding of farmsteads played a key role.
- Late 19th and early 20th estates of particular significance are the Duke of Bedford estate around Tavistock and the Hambledon estate of W.H. Smith around Moretonhampstead.
- The Duchy of Cornwall estate was a significant and historic landowner for many generations.
- From the late 1940s changing animal welfare standards, post war materials and increasing use of machinery resulted in the development of multi-purpose pre-fabricated buildings that economised on farm labour and are critical to the modern farming industry.
- Historic farmsteads and their buildings have become increasingly redundant for agricultural uses due to the restructuring of the agricultural industry, and as new non-agricultural modes of rural living have become increasingly popular.

LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT CONTEXT

Historic farmsteads and their buildings are an integral part of the rural landscape and how it has changed over centuries. The scale and patterns of enclosure of fields by boundaries, woodland (and sometimes industrial sites) in the present-day farming landscape, and their relationship to the siting of isolated farmsteads, dwellings and settlements, can reveal how the land and its resources was farmed, exploited and managed in the past.

Most parts of England are characterised by a mixture of settlement patterns, either those areas dominated by large nucleated villages with few isolated farmsteads or those areas that have fewer smaller villages and higher densities of isolated farmsteads and

hamlets, such as Dartmoor. Settlement on Dartmoor is dominated by scattered farmsteads, hamlets and small villages including a high proportion of medieval or earlier origin. Approximately 70% of the farmsteads within the National Park are isolated and 20% are located in hamlets. The remainder are located in villages which were evident by the late 11th century and continued to develop from that time.

Over half of the land area in England is enclosed farmland, most of which dates from before 1750. It results from the ancient, piecemeal or survey-planned enclosure and reorganisation of medieval strip fields and other forms of farmland, woodland and rough ground including land held in common.

WITHIN DARTMOOR:

- From the medieval period much of the area's farmland, particularly that adjacent to open moorland, displayed a separation between the 'infield' which was cropped for corn, rye and hay and the 'outfield' which was mostly used for grazing and was occasionally ploughed for crops (convertible farming): later enclosure may have retained the distinctive curved profiles of the strips into which they were subdivided.
- Irregular field patterns, characterised by dry-stone walls, stone-faced hedge banks and hedges, represent the medieval and post-medieval enclosure of moorland (called 'intakes'), and more rarely woodland, and in particular the piecemeal enclosure of medieval strips which were sited around farming hamlets and of outfields in occasional arable use.
- The recently produced Dartmoor Historic Environment Character Assessment 2014 (HECA) and the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation map (HLC) show the predominant pattern of enclosure (i.e. outside of the **high moor**) to be that of later enclosure of medieval strip fields.
- Substantial blocks of late 18th and 19th century regular enclosure are strongly associated with the establishment of new farms on the higher rough ground, which around the moor are termed 'newtakes'. Regular fields, on lower ground to the south and east more often relate to 18th and 19th century enlargement of farms and improvement of the rural landscape for both arable and stock farming.

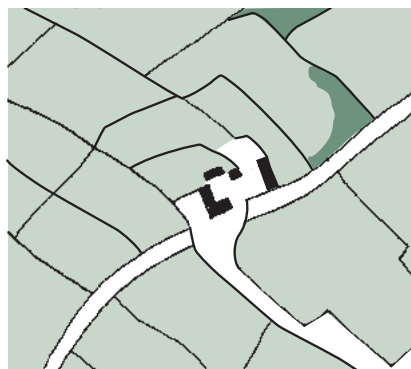
ENCLOSED FARMSTEAD TYPES

Ancient irregular enclosure



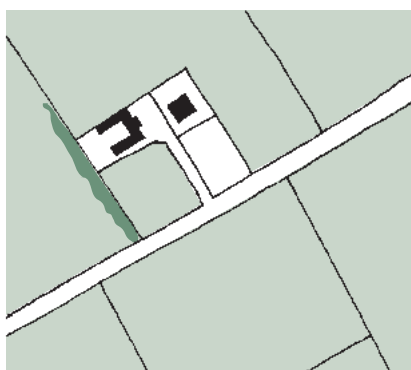
Such enclosure is 18th century or earlier in date and may relate to the creation of farmland from woodland (termed assarting) and areas of rough grazing in and around heath and upland moor. Ancient enclosure is strongly associated with dispersed settlement around which farmland was interspersed with blocks of strip fields, rough land and extensive areas of woodland.

Enclosure from strip fields



The majority of Dartmoor's fields are considered to have been derived from the strip fields system of agriculture which was common throughout England during the medieval period. Evidence for this is seen curved field boundaries, including those found along the **high moorland** edge.

Regular or planned enclosure



This uncommon pattern on Dartmoor resulted from a process of formal agreement between the late 18th and 19th centuries essentially on the **high moor**, often driven by estates. Planned enclosure landscapes can display a great variety in the scale of their fields and the density and size of their farmsteads.

Enclosure against the moorland



Farms developed next to the open moor to take advantage of access for stock grazing. They may feature a driftway from the moorland edge towards the farmyard in order to direct herded animals homewards. Some farms displayed an 'infield' and 'outfield' system of land use. 'Corn ditches', a local term for ditches intended to keep livestock away from cereal crops and hay before it was harvested, were often used as moorland boundaries.

HISTORIC FARMSTEAD CHARACTER AREAS

See the following pages for illustration of each of these areas.

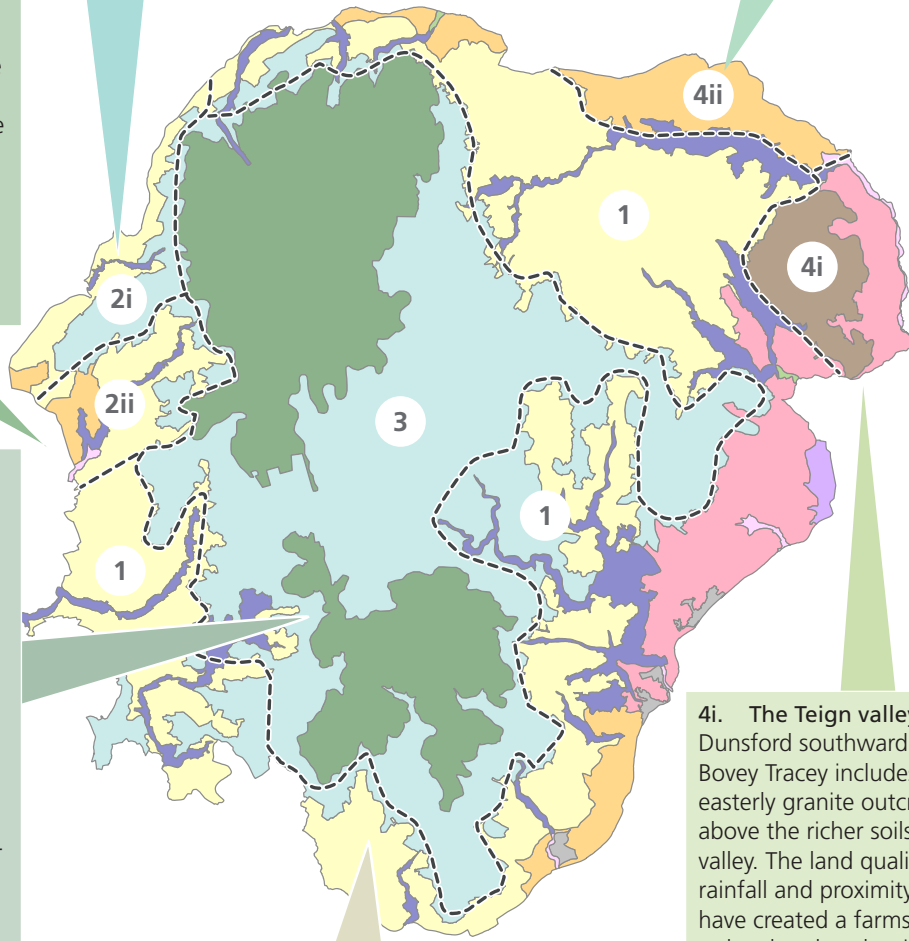
2i. The north-western moorland fringe is a narrow strip between Sourton and Lydford. The proximity of the **high moorland** peaks makes access difficult to the open moor. It features a mixture of mainly small farmsteads with few buildings, mostly late, in areas of mixed irregular medieval to regular 19th century enclosure. Land quality here is poor due to the high moorland topography.

4ii. The north-eastern farmlands northward from the Teign gorge to Cheriton Bishop feature a lowland character apparent in the relatively larger farmsteads with a greater loss of field boundaries than elsewhere. The area has a high occurrence of courtyard farmsteads set within open, rolling countryside with fields resulting from piecemeal enclosure of strip fields and blocks of common land.

2ii. The upper Tavy valley is a rural-industrial landscape of dispersed houses, cottages and former smallholdings, some of the latter probably relating to part-time miner-farmers and with some influence from the Bedford and Radford estates. Field boundaries are largely stone-faced banks, with hedges on the lower slopes, part of a pattern extending into Cornwall.

3. The **high moor** The vast open upland has a low density of isolated farmsteads, some of medieval origin but mainly late 18th and 19th century 'newtake' enclosure farms of large regular pattern associated with estate agreement and with commoners' grazing rights. These farmsteads generally relate to 'intakes' (enclosure) of moorland, a few from medieval times onwards, but also from later enclosure. Some large model farms exist such as Tor Royal and Prince Hall.

Many boundaries are late stone walled field boundaries and also large 20th century fenced areas and conifer plantations.



1. The moorland fringe

It is clear that the majority of early historic farmsteads existing today are located within a pastoral landscape which retains features such as hedges and routeways that are contemporary with their construction period. Essentially this comprises the moorland edge slopes and upland valleys, often associated with grazing on common land.

This area includes the earliest recorded ancient tenements on Dartmoor, and also longhouses – the archetypal Dartmoor farmstead – which often comprise a longhouse with few buildings constructed in local stone, and with small ventilation openings.

Those farms historically settled against the open moorland often feature characteristics related to moorland rights and grazing. Corn ditches protected the moorland boundaries and sometimes funnel shaped driftways (or strolls) provided the facility to herd animals towards the farmstead from the open moor. Pounds or yards at the steading allowed for safe holding of stock.

4i. The Teign valley from Dunsford southward towards Bovey Tracey includes the most easterly granite outcrops set above the richer soils of the valley. The land quality, lower rainfall and proximity to Exeter have created a farmstead style related to the richer soils of mid and east Devon. Many farm names imply a hamlet association and there is an unusually high level of nucleation of farms, especially at Christow.

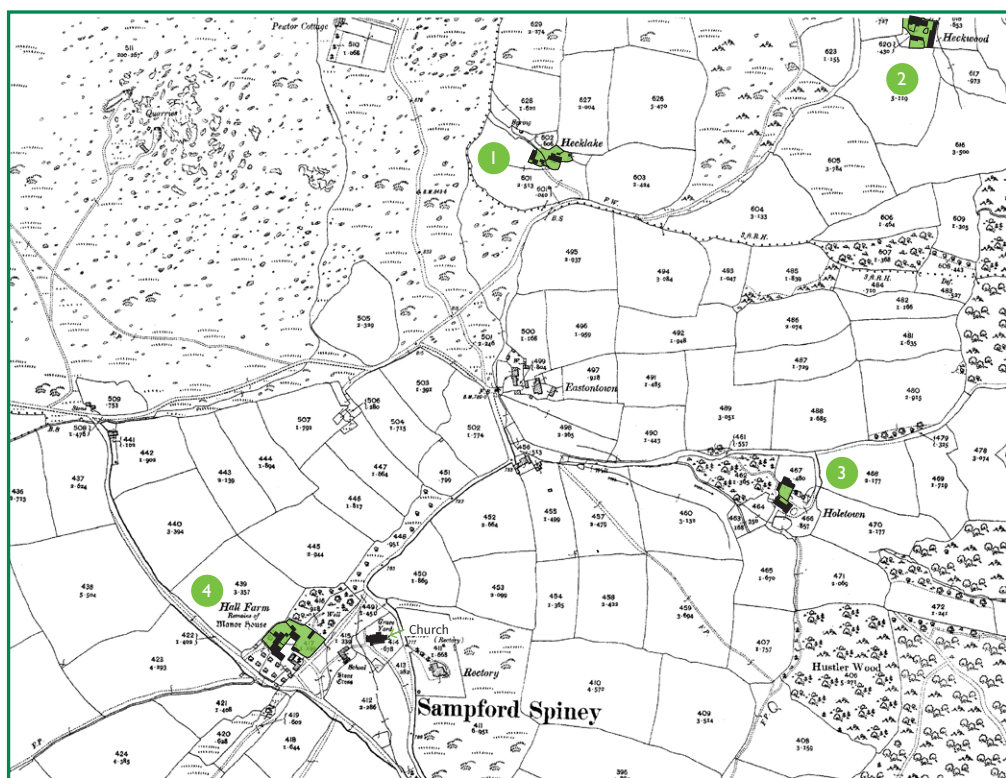
It is the principal area for cob buildings and by tradition for thatch, which since the early 20th century has been largely replaced by corrugated steel sheeting on farm buildings. This area overall shows the highest number of barns of any type, and together with the eastern side of the **moorland fringe** has the highest numbers of linhays and ash houses.

Landscape Character Types

- Farmed and Forested Plateau
- Inland Elevated Undulating Land
- Lowland Plains
- Moorland Edge Slopes
- Settled Valley Floors
- Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors
- Unsettled High Upland Moorland
- Upland Moorland with Tors
- Upland River Valleys
- Upper Farmed and Wooded Slopes

Source: Dartmoor Landscape Character Assessment

AREA 1: THE MOORLAND FRINGE



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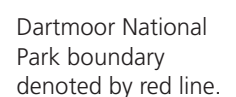
The moorland fringe exhibits many instances of driftways created to funnel stock into moorland edge farms. This area of Dartmoor's western fringe shows graphically two driftways leading down from the open moor to farmsteads. The northerly one passes Hecklake (1) in an area which may have been first enclosed from rough ground. The track leads eastwards *alongside the parish boundary* to Heckwood Farm (2), an historic longhouse steading. To the south, the driftway leads to the historic Eastontown and beyond through land enclosed from strip fields to Holleton (3) and the village of Sampford Spiney, both longhouse sites. The courtyard layout comprising house, barns and stables at Sampford Spiney's manor (4) dates from at least the 17th century. Both tracks lead down the valley to woodland and the river Walkham where shelter and water could be found.



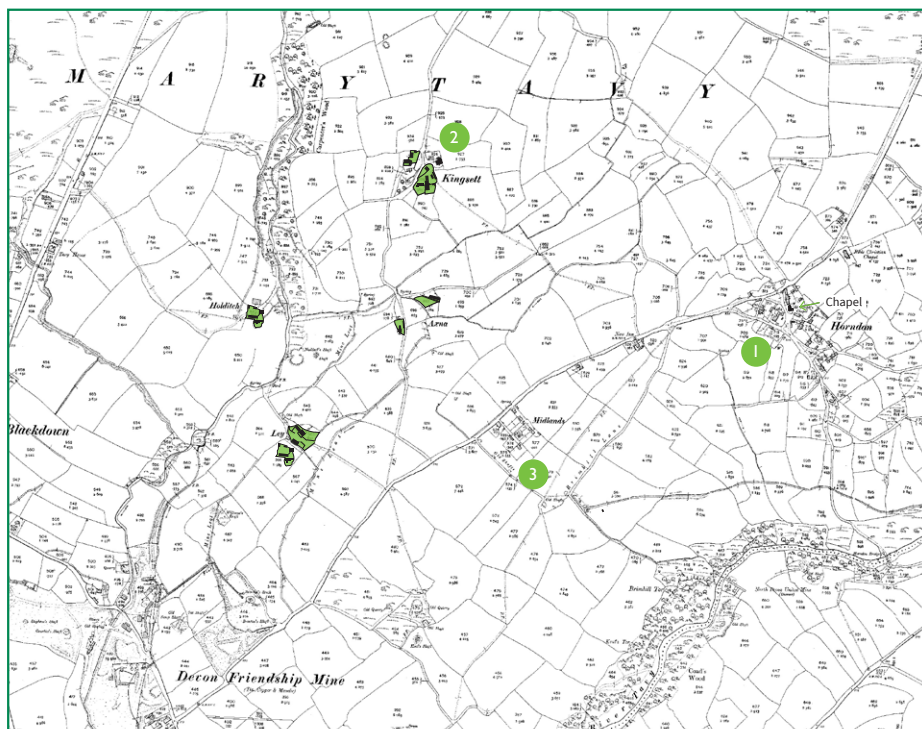
The increased vegetation partially obscuring the driftways is an indication of reduced grazing. This might well be caused by a reduction or loss of stock farming hereabouts. However, the strongly marked trackways towards the **high moor** may indicate increased leisure traffic. © Historic England



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AREA 2ii: THE UPPER TAVY VALLEY



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The miner-farmer units here encouraged by some estates show in the greater density of smallholdings when compared to the neighbouring land. Quarrying and mining are evident within the field system. This is a medieval farming landscape with farming settlements that sometimes shrank into individual farmsteads. There is at least one possible former longhouse within the farming hamlet of Horndon (1), 16th and 17th century farmhouses used as farm buildings at Kingsett (2). Midlands (3) was established as a planned mining settlement.



The former small units of the upper Tavy landscape have nowadays been aggregated to some extent although with only minimal field boundary loss when compared with much of the **moorland fringe** elsewhere. Evidence of mining and quarrying can still be seen as pits, mineshaft and chimney remains. © Historic England

AREA 3: THE HIGH MOOR



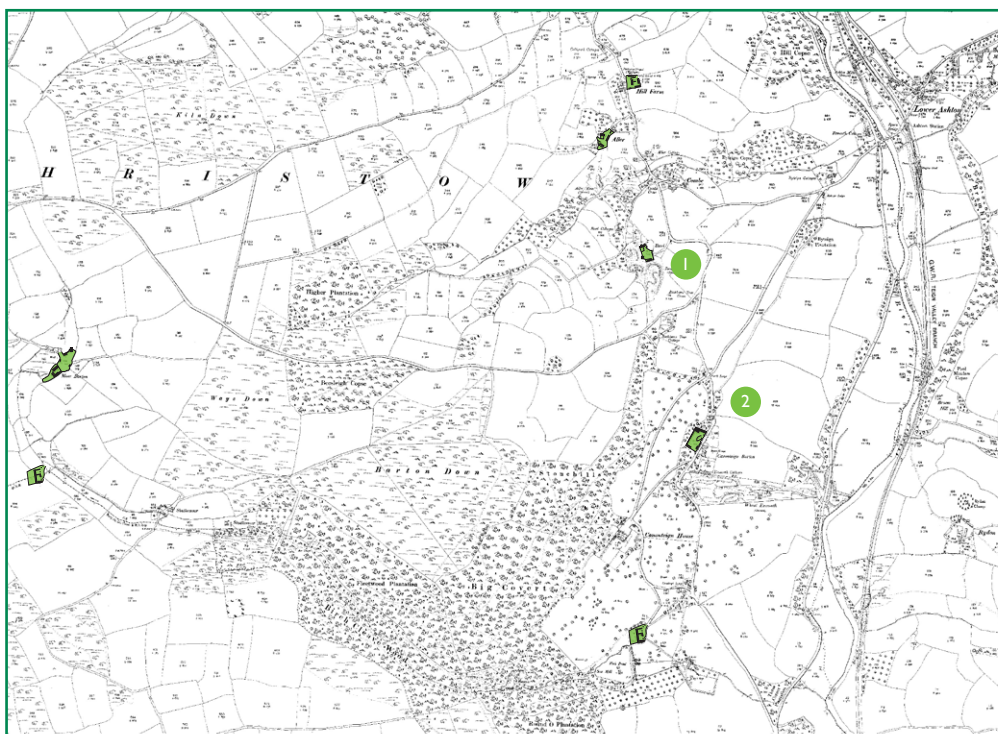
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The exposed nature of the **high moor** has limited the number of farmsteads. The majority of farms in this landscape are mainly in the sheltered river valleys such as here along the East Dart where 18th and 19th century development occurred on former medieval settlement.



This view looking north into the **high moor** shows, in the foreground, large newtake fields and plantations adapted from post medieval fields. In the mid ground is a medieval farmstead with fields derived from strip fields. Beyond these lie large modern newtakes and plantations created for 18th and 18th century farms. © Historic England

4i: THE TEIGN VALLEY



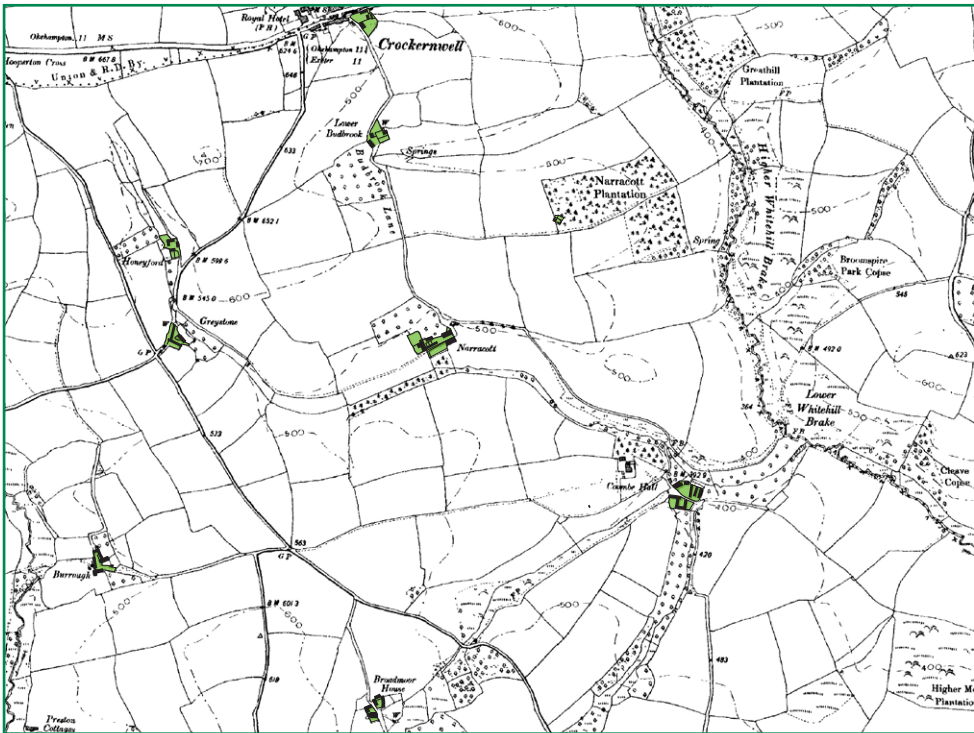
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The **Teign Valley farmlands** stretch south from Dunsford towards Bovey Tracey and lie on a mixed geology, with relatively rich soils and lower rainfall than the high moor. These conditions and their proximity to Exeter have created a farmstead style and high density of farmsteads akin to those of the richer soils of mid and north Devon. It is the principal area for cob and thatch buildings with one of the highest number of barns of any type, high numbers of linhays and ash houses. Note the distinctive curved field boundaries, following the lines of medieval strip fields, to the west of the 15th century house with its attached agricultural range at Reed Farm (1), and also the large enclosed fields north of Canonteign Barton (2). Large enclosed fields are associated with these high-status medieval barton farms.



Dispersed multi-yards and evidence of enclosure from curved medieval strip fields are distinctive features of this area. This farmstead south of Dunsford developed on the site of a medieval hamlet and astride a routeway, with a 16th century house and 17th-19th century farm buildings set around several dispersed yards. © Historic England

4ii:THE NORTH-EASTERN FARMLANDS



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The farmland northwards beyond the Teign gorge and the higher moorland has a lowland character seen in the relatively larger farmsteads, more frequent arable plots and greater loss of field boundaries. Large courtyard farmsteads are the most prolific layout type, some with multiple yards.



This view of the **Teign valley** looking towards the **north-eastern farmlands**, taken in July, shows that many of the older field boundaries have been lost or adapted to larger fields. The high number of cropped areas shows that, even here, grassland still dominates the landscape.

© Historic England

HISTORIC FARMSTEADS

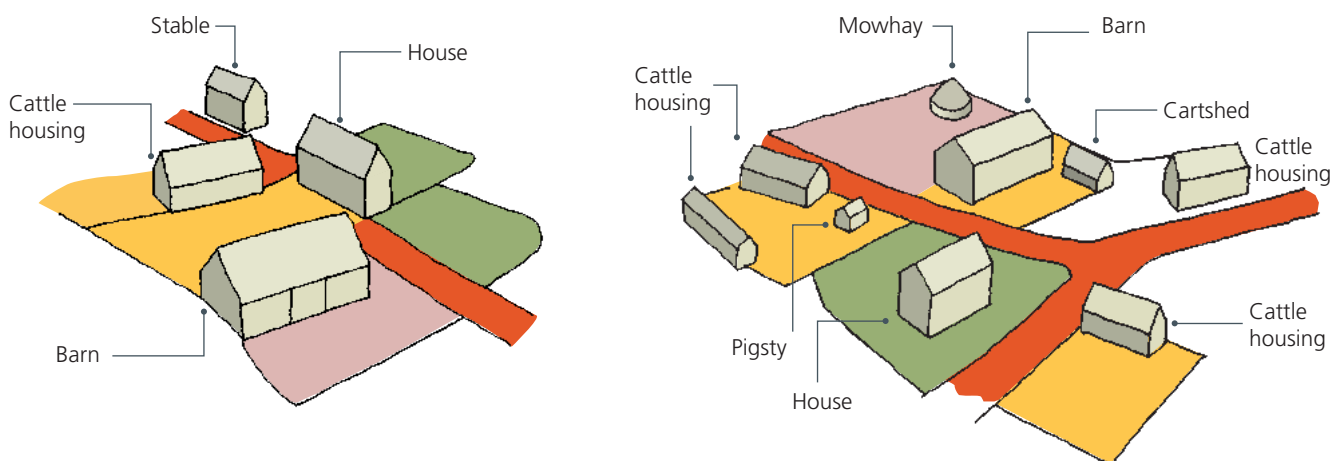
Historic farmsteads and their buildings can reflect both local traditions and national influences. The size and layout of farmsteads results from their status, farm size and the extent to which farms mixed or specialised in the growing of corn, the rearing and fattening of cattle and dairying. Along with the farmhouse and threshing barn, specialist or combination buildings to house animals, crops and to perform various related functions were needed.

Yard areas between and around buildings allow the management of animals and crop or waste movement and storage. They will often display evidence of successive episodes of change as farmsteads and buildings were developed according to agricultural needs over time. They therefore constitute historical documents in themselves. They can only be read effectively where historic evidence is retained.

The range of plan types or layouts display differences in how these buildings and spaces are arranged. The layout of a farmstead is key to understanding how it functioned and related to the landscape, and how individual buildings functioned and related to each other.

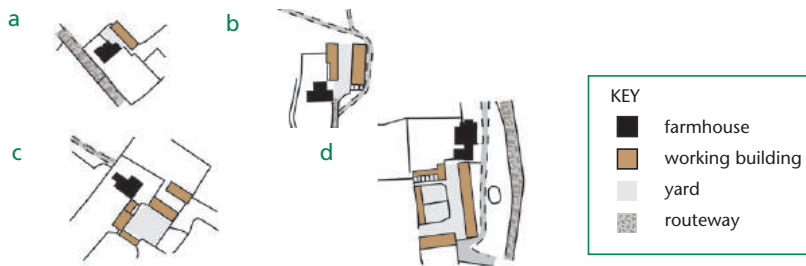
The simplest of layouts may have featured a single yard area. These yards often expanded in size and number as farmsteads developed and management became more sophisticated. Yards were an important part of the daily routine in managing animals and the storage and movement of feed, crops and carts which needed to be kept clean up to the point of use. Most yards were used by cattle for feeding, handling and collection for milking. Their dung might be stored in the middle of the yard, only being spread on the land when weather conditions permitted. Cleaner yards and access routes developed where crops and feed movement were involved; for example the mowhay or stackyard for hay and straw storage.

COURTYARD AND DISPERSED PLANS

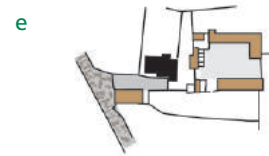


The yard for cattle, and from which manure was returned to the farmland, forms the focal point of the loose courtyard plan on the left (see a–d over the page). Dispersed multi-yard plans, as illustrated on the right and on the next page (k), often developed around routes and tracks, are often associated with farmsteads that specialised in the rearing and fattening of livestock, the various yards being used to separate stock of different age. In some landscapes, especially around areas of common land and woodland, the cattle were provided with bracken and leaves, and the yards might also be used to store and process timber.

Courtyard layouts are – at 48% of recorded examples – the most common plan form in Dartmoor



a-d) *Loose Courtyard layouts* have buildings set around one or more sides of a yard.



e) *L-shaped plans* with additional detached buildings to the third or fourth sides or more rarely fourth sides (11%) are generally large to very large in scale, and may be regular or loose courtyard in their form.

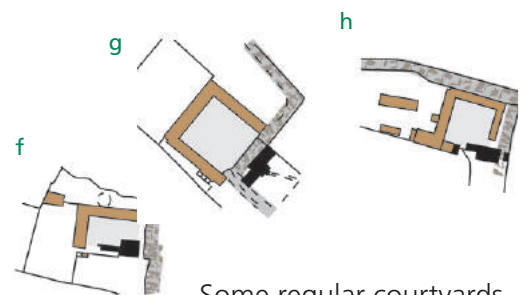
f-j) *Regular Courtyard layouts*

consist of linked ranges formally arranged around one or more yards. The most common are:

L-plans (f) which are typically small-medium in scale and have the buildings arranged as two linked ranges to create an L-shape.

U-plans (g) which are medium-scale farmsteads, sometimes larger, with buildings arranged around three sides of a yard, which is open to one side.

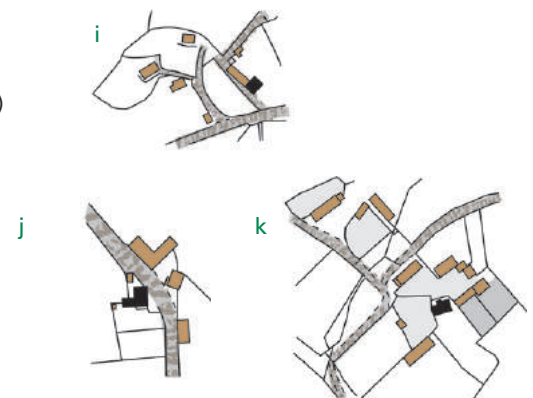
Full courtyard plans (h) which have working buildings around all four sides of the yard and are associated with gentry houses.



Some regular courtyards have two or more yards.

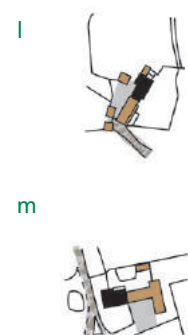
Dispersed or Scattered layouts

These have *no single focal yard area* and the working buildings are dispersed along a routeway (j) or irregularly around the farmhouse (i) or around two or more dispersed yards (k). These are concentrated in upland and wood pasture landscapes in England, and at 29% of the recorded total, are another common type. Many appear to have developed around routeways to common land for holding stock. They are usually found around the fringes of moorland and sometimes feature multiple yards for holding cattle. Some appear scattered due to topography, whilst others are amalgamated into hamlets. At 29% of recorded farmsteads in the National Park these are a highly distinctive part of Dartmoor's landscape.



Linear layouts

These have the working buildings built *in-line with integral farmhouses* (l) and occasionally extended into L-shaped plans (m). They are most closely associated with upland and common-edge farmsteads in England. These were most probably the dominant farmstead types until the 17th century and include the longhouses dating from the medieval period which are such a significant surviving feature of Dartmoor. Linear plans now only account for about 4.4% of the total in the National Park, and these include small farmsteads in the rural industrial landscapes to the west. They were either built in a single phase or have developed and extended in a piecemeal manner, and from the medieval period many were incorporated within larger farmsteads as they expanded into courtyard or dispersed plans.



Parallel plan layouts

These frequently have a range of farm buildings lying *opposite the house and its attached buildings* (n). These may be evolved from earlier linear farmsteads with possibly an opposing isolated barn or outbuilding. These are now more widely found in the west moor fringe than elsewhere. (5.6% in the National Park).



Some farmstead layout types



This farmstead in the north-eastern farmlands developed into a large farm with **double courtyards** and a water wheel driven power supply but eventually outgrew the site, and expanded in modern times.
© Historic England



This farmstead is a turn of the century estate farmstead. The simple **L-shaped** layout with bank barn is suitable for a small stock farm. The east-west alignment maximises the sun's benefits. © Historic England



This farmstead is a **dispersed** steading due to the steeply sloping valley terrain. © Historic England



Lettaford Hamlet is an ancient site of originally four longhouse farmsteads developed as **loose courtyards**. © Historic England

SMALLHOLDINGS

Smallholdings have rarely survived as historic buildings in their landscape context, and it is common to find converted or rebuilt structures within their plots.

Dual-income farms combined small-scale subsistence farming to supplement the income derived from other employment such as quarrying or mining. They often relied upon access to common land and woodland and typically had little or no enclosed land. Smallholdings will often be identified by their location in areas of very small fields close to areas of common land. The principle area known is in the **upper Tavy valley** near Horndon.

FIELD BARNs AND OUTFARMS

Field buildings are largely single buildings set within the fields away from the main farmstead. Their principal benefit was to store fodder locally to animals and provide shelter for the animals themselves. Outfarms provide a larger facility, usually as two or more buildings sometimes with an enclosed yard. They may be retained from an earlier steading having lost the farmhouse and are particularly rare on Dartmoor.

Key farm building types

The need to store and process straw, grain, house cattle and their fodder, produce cider and other functions gave rise to a rich variety of farm building types which are illustrated in the document **CS2 – Historic Farm Buildings Character**. The most distinctive Dartmoor types encountered are key features in the landscape. These comprise:

- **Farmhouses:** Dating from the medieval period are:
 - **Longhouses** often with a shared entrance for humans and animals: Dartmoor has one of the most significant groupings of these buildings in Western Europe. They lie down the slope of the land, with the animal end (the shippon), at the lower end.
 - **Cross-passage houses**, usually 3 room plan, of similar external appearance as the domestic end of the longhouse but lying across the slope of land.
- **Barns**, Dartmoor's key types are single-storey **threshing barns**, found most often in the **north-eastern farmlands** and two-storey **bank barns** which constitute about 30% of barns.
- **Shippons:** The most common farm building type, this cowhouse is found in different forms, but typically with an upper floor, whether simply a hayloft, threshing floor in a bank barn, or tallet to a linhay. Stall arrangements are found both across the building and along the axis.
- **Linhay:** This two-storey and open-fronted building is emblematic of Devon farming and more predominant in the **north-eastern farmlands** where climate was more conducive to open access for stock. Their character and significance is easily marred by infilling of the frontage.
- **Ash house:** For storing ash from domestic fires over winter, and for fertilising fields in the spring. These small usually circular structures are unknown beyond Devon and the great majority are located in the north-east of the National Park. (70% of all).

MATERIALS AND DETAIL

The use of local materials not only reflects availability but is the most important factor in distinguishing the regional identity of buildings. Local vernacular styles of buildings emerged from cultural influences and are represented in the earliest extant farm buildings. The distinctively local walling styles, roofing materials and forms of construction sometimes survived much longer on working farm buildings than on farmhouses.

During the 19th century a range of standard architectural and design details, such as windows and roof trusses increasingly appeared on Dartmoor along with Baltic softwoods, Welsh slate and bricks. Together with enlightenment both in animal welfare and work flow processes these served to change the character of farm buildings away from the vernacular towards more standard styles.

- The great majority of historic farm buildings of any date are constructed in local granite, generally bonded in lime mortar.
- Along the *western moorland fringe* granite is also accompanied by Hurdwick stone (greenstone), some dolerite basalt and killas for building.
- From the middle 19th century quarried grey Devonian limestone began to be used for new buildings, typically with brick reveals. Victorian taste gradually introduced details such as overhanging eaves and gables, fascia and barge boards (all unknown in local buildings before) and particular window designs. Such buildings are unmistakable in their style and Hambledon estate buildings in the Moretonhampstead area are typical.
- The geology and soil types of the **Teign Valley** are unusually varied and building stone is mixed. Whilst granite is seen, the general building stones include basalt, dolerite, with some greenstone.
- Cob (earth) buildings are predominantly seen in the **Teign Valley** including the upper valley around the Chagford area parishes, where suitable soils are found. Often, though not always, protected from severe weather with a lime plaster these 'soft' looking round-edged buildings with thatched roof covering are perceived as the archetypal Devon farm building. Use of corrugated iron on Dartmoor in lieu of thatch.
- Roofing was with local slate or, to the east and south of the **high moor**, could be in combed straw thatch known as combed wheat reed with plain ridge. Small sized Devon or Cornish slates (peggies) were historically laid in diminishing courses and bedded with lime mortar. Some roofs (mainly to the west) were 'ragged' with large slates partially untrimmed and usually nailed directly to rafters obviating need for battens; both of these types are now rare, ragged roofs the more so.
- Devon slate production declined as Welsh 'tally'

or regular sized slates became more available, and ended in the 1920's. Until the arrival of the Environmentally Sensitive Area agricultural scheme in 1994 replacement with foreign slate had become common. Cornish and occasionally Welsh slate are now seen on renovated buildings.

- Slated roofs were left without fascia or barge boards, or rainwater gutters deliberately to allow rainwater to fall onto yards as an expedient to cleaning. Rainwater disposal generally appeared in the later 19th century.
- Eaves and verges were set tight to walls; hips were not common in slated roofs and when found often faced towards the prevailing weather direction.
- Combed wheat 'reed' (straw) thatch with hips, half-hips and a plain ridge was commonly found throughout the eastern and south zones
- historically, but this is largely superseded by corrugated sheet roofing and occasionally slate. Most thatched roofs occur on listed historic farmhouses and converted farm buildings located predominantly on the eastern side of the National Park.
- Lime torching (usually full torching) was used to the underside of slated roofs on an individual building basis, but more commonly to stables and barns, also granaries; likewise lime plastering to interior walls.
- Oak structural timber was commonly used until softwood came into use from around the early 19th century. Posts to linways might be oak or monolithic stone (to first-floor level) rarely anything else. Elm and chestnut also occur in historic farm buildings.

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS AND FITTINGS

Surviving fittings and details within farm buildings are mostly of 19th and early 20th-century date but occasional examples of earlier doors, windows and flooring can be found. Less common features include pigeon nesting holes, small animal cubbyholes, for example: dogs, poultry and more rarely bee boles are found (these recesses in sheltered walls, usually at or near the farmhouse serve to house bee skeps.) There are a dozen or so known locations on Dartmoor.

Typical features

- Stalls and other interior features (eg mangers, hay racks) in **stables** and **cattle housing** of proven 19th century or earlier date.
- Doors (usually planked/ledged and braced) with locally made iron strap hinges and handles, and heavy section frames.
- Windows, often of a standard type nationally, that are half-glazed, shuttered and/or with hit-and-miss ventilators. Horizontal sliding hit-and-miss ventilators achieved wide popularity in the mid- to late 19th century.
- Industrial fittings (iron or concrete stalls, mangers etc) associated with planned or industrial 19th-century farmsteads. Also 1940s improvements.

Significant features include

- Doors and windows of pre-19th-century date, eg mullioned windows, sliding shutters to windows
- **Dairies** with internal shelving, creamers etc
- **Barns** with *in situ* threshing machines and other processing machines, and threshing floors
- **Horse engine houses** with internal gearing
- Smoking chambers, malting kilns, brewhouses
- **Cider houses** with internal mills and/or presses
- Tramways to industrial complexes with good survival of other features (see below)
- Historic floor surfaces such as brick, slate, flagstone

and cobble to stables and cattle housing, with drainage channels.

- Early roof carcasses and first floor structures.

Unusual inscribed features of historic interest, often difficult to spot include:

- *Tallies* on walls near threshing floors and corn holes for noting production of grain, and numbers to grain bins.
- *Incised ritual marks* for protecting produce or livestock, which are usually in the form of 'daisy wheels' or 'Marian marks'.
- *Burned ritual marks* made to 'fight fire with fire' and thus to prevent fires happening in buildings that are themselves flammable, or which store flammable materials. Some marks date from the 17th century, but most date from the revival of the tradition in the 19th century. The marks usually take the form of a deep candle scorch.
- *Graffiti or artwork*, such as soldiers' graffiti, which is tied in with significant cultural events or graffiti recording names of workers, sales etc.
- *Constructional marks* are those associated with the transport and prefabrication of structural carpentry and timber frames, such as shipping and carpenters' marks. Also laying out marks from the creating of the timber frame in the carpenter's yard.