

Moor Medieval: Built Environment Group

The group will initially concentrate on Widecombe Parish, and the medieval manors within, and then spread to the other parishes within the project.

Dartmoor is blessed with an exceptionally rich assemblage of medieval structures. There are numerous but dispersed records and information about many of these. The aim would be to use available existing information and field work to help improve our understanding of the longhouse, its role in Medieval Dartmoor, its relationship to the landscape and the insight it gives into medieval society.

Higher Uppacott: The repairs to the Grade I listed longhouse (funded by the Moor than Meets the Eye project) have resulted in some discoveries which have led to a significant and unexpected re-evaluation of the house's development. In light of this, the built environment group will use the above mentioned source material to review known longhouses and establish whether these findings impact the interpretation of other local longhouses.

Visualising Medieval Dartmoor: Most of the surviving, occupied medieval buildings have undergone significant changes and extensions in later periods. The aim would be then, to produce a detailed visual picture of what the medieval built environment of Widecombe and beyond looked like. The focus would include extant structures such as longhouses but also the other medieval structures such as three-room cross passage houses, gentry houses, churches and chapels, boundary stones, crosses, bridges, holy wells, warrens, drove ways, and roads etc. Archaeological sites will also be included if sufficient information is available. Lidar research will be undertaken across medieval sites and their environs to see if this can increase knowledge and understanding of these sites.

All of the above would tie into the collimation project "Mapping the landscape of Medieval Dartmoor"

As David is focussing his documentary research on two key periods, the 1300 – 1421 and the early 16th century, we may want to mirror this. There should be plenty of evidence for 1524 -7, though getting a realistic picture of the built environment for the earlier periods is a lot trickier but the churches/chapels represent a good start. It would be great if someone was inspired to focus on these structures. The Moor is blessed with some amazing medieval churches/screens etc. but our impression of them, like the houses, is probably as something fixed and unchanging - based on their appearance today but this is obviously far from the truth.

To paraphrase David's "Moor Medieval Study Group: Turning Ideas into Projects" – these suggestions are only a starting point. The next thing is to see whether we want to do some, or all, of the projects as they stand; whether we would like to revise/amend them; or whether we would instead prefer to do different projects altogether. Then it is just finding people willing and able to give time to the project.