Art in Support of Improved Understanding of the Changing Character of Exmoor National Park

Final Report for The Exmoor Society and Exmoor National Park Authority







Professor Robin McInnes OBE FICE FGS FRGS FRSA
Coastal & Geotechnical Services
Isle of Wight, UK





William Spreat Lynmouth c.1840





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Author(s) and contact details..... Professor Robin McInnes OBE

Email address: rgmcinnes@btinternet.com

Tel: 01983 854865

Front Cover Images: Top Left: The Doone Glen, Lynmouth by A. R. Quinton. Image courtesy: Salmon's.

Top Right: Dulverton Bridge by John Swete. 1796. Image Courtesy: Devon Archives & Local Studies.

Bottom: Lynmouth by Albert Goodwin. Image courtesy: Chris Beetles Gallery, London.

Half-title Image: *Lynmouth* by W. Spreat. c.1840. Lithograph. Private Collection Title Pages: *Dunkery Beacon* by Frederick J. Widgery. 1898. Watercolour. Courtesy: Bridgeman Images.

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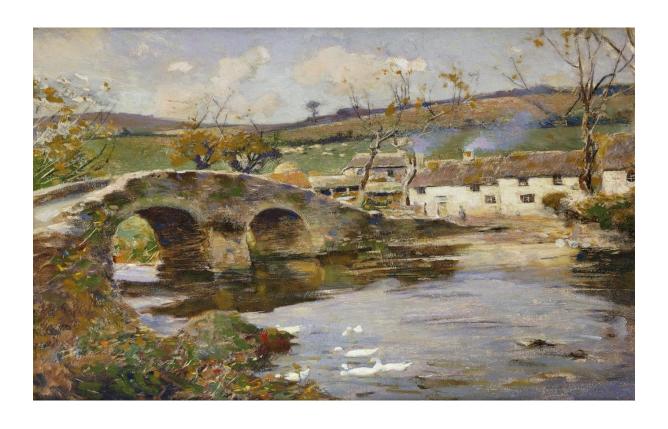


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1. Executive Summary

The remarkable variety, scenic character and natural environments of our National Parks result from their often-complex geological history over millions of years, and the physical processes acting upon them. Their coastlines and interiors, which vary considerably in terms of their durability, have been subjected continuously to the processes of weathering, coastal erosion, instability and flooding. The recognition of such processes of physical change, and the practical experiences of their impacts over the last two centuries in particular, have demonstrated that these landscapes are naturally dynamic and, in some locations, are prone to significant changes over time and geographical extent. Climate change, alongside less predictable weather patterns, and risks from sea level rise bring increasing challenges for those involved in land management on both the coast and within the interior of the country. In fact, many believe that meeting the challenges of climate change is the most important issue to be faced by landowners, environmental scientists and decision-makers over the next decades.

It is now well established that sustainable landscape management of our National Parks, which often encompass both coastal zones and the hinterlands, and the diverse range of habitats and species that they support, can only be achieved through a thorough understanding of long-term evolution and natural processes. Alongside the technical tools that are currently available to inform us about the rate of such physical and environmental change, historical evidence, including artworks and other imagery resources such as old photographs, literature accounts and maps have allowed recognition of the nature, scale and rate of change over a much longer time-frame than is normally considered by scientists and practitioners. Such imagery has also allowed changes to cultural heritage to be better understood, sometimes providing the only record of lost buildings or other remains.

The use of artworks, in particular, has been promoted by the author through a series of studies supported by The Crown Estate and Historic England, together with his own research and, more recently, taking advantage of a significant increase in the availability of these art media online (McInnes & Stubbings, 2011¹; McInnes, 2016², McInnes & Stanford-Clark, 2019³). The photographing of all of the nation's public collections of oil paintings, now held on the ArtUK website (https://artuk.org), and the *Watercolour World* project (https://www.watercolourworld.org) are providing tens of thousands of informative landscape images to new audiences, many publicly available to view for the first time.

The focus for previous research by the author has been particularly in the fields of coastal processes and cultural heritage although past study reports have noted the rich resource of currently underused full colour art images spanning the period from 1770s to the 1940s that depict natural environments. These images can allow a long-term perspective to be gained of our changing physical landscapes but also architecture and rural life utilising colour imagery that extends back 100 years before even the introduction of black and white photography.

Exmoor National Park is widely acknowledged as being one of the most diverse and beautiful landscapes in Great Britain with a dramatic coastal zone and a diverse pattern of farmland, wooded hills and valleys and open moorland incised in places by deep river valleys. Designated a National Park in 1954 its landscape and management has been the subject of a series of studies and reports over the years culminating in the very comprehensive *Exmoor National Park Landscape Character Assessment in 2018* (Fiona Fyfe Associates, 2018⁴). This report reviewed the Park's natural environments and establish nine *Landscape Character Types* (LCTs), which are generic in nature and these also form appropriate units for the case studies within this study report.

This study illustrates how art resources can be utilised to benefit management of the Exmoor National Park, drawing on the wisdom of hindsight. The results can support sustainable development within National Parks as set out in the *Defra/National Parks England Eight Point Plan* (Defra/National Parks England, 2016⁴), and also contribute to the goal of the Government's *25 Year Environment Plan* (Defra,2018⁵) *"to develop resilient landscapes and seas...."*. In particular this study will provide an important opportunity to raise awareness of the benefits of utilising the valuable yet currently underused art resource with the reassurance of artistic accuracy through adoption of a tried and tested art ranking system (McInnes & Stanford-Clark, 2019³).

It is fortunate that this part of North Devon has a rich art legacy from early artists and writers exploring its remote landscapes in the last three decades of the 18th century, through the Victorian period when improved communications saw the development of tourism and an increased demand for paintings from visitors, and on into the twentieth century when art landscape postcards became popular, as did paintings of hunting scenes produced by some of Great Britain's artists set against the dramatic moorland landscapes. These artworks provided the evidence-base for this comprehensive study.

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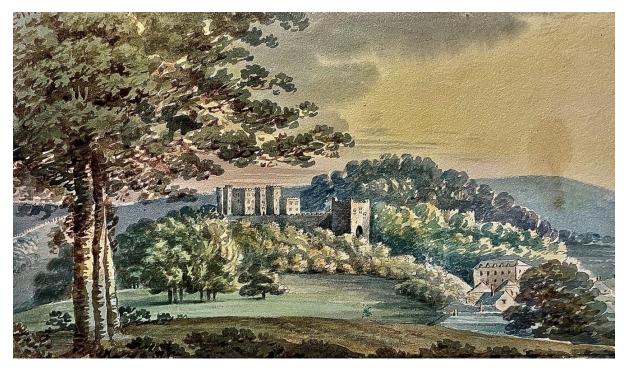


Figure 1.1: View of Dunster Castle by Rev. John Swete. 1796. With kind permission of Devon Archives & Local Studies. DHC 564M/F/10.

2. Study Objectives and Approach

2.1. Introduction

What lessons can we learn from observations of changes that have affected the landscape and character of Exmoor National Park over the last 250 years? How and to what extent have these landscapes been affected by both natural and anthropogenic influences over that time? Increasingly sophisticated technologies now allow us to observe and monitor changing conditions, but such innovative approaches have been introduced relatively recently and there are few locations across England where systematic environmental and coastal monitoring have been undertaken for more than thirty years. Alongside technical tools we can now also take particular advantage of a vast additional resource of historical imagery that is becoming increasingly available online, and which allows a much longer-term perspective to be gained of all aspects of environmental change; such insight can helpfully inform both day to day management and future planning of environmentally sensitive inland and coastal frontages such as those found within Exmoor National Park.

2.2. Study Objectives

The importance of understanding the impacts of long-term environmental change, both inland and within coastal zones has long been recognised, particularly since the development and introduction of improved coastal planning and management in the early 1990s and since then (Defra, 2006¹; Natural England, 2017²; MHCLG, 2019³; Moore & McInnes, 2021⁴). The result has been improved planning policies alongside the preparation of very comprehensive landscape assessments (Fiona Fyfe Associates, 2018⁵). These plans have helped to provide answers to the increasing need to understand and manage long-term change. A key objective of this study has been, therefore, to improve understanding but also to inform policy-making and every day site management by providing an additional, easily accessible tool for use by scientists and practitioners in the following ways by:-

- providing a rich, readily available source of data and evidence to help inform decisions made by the National Park Authority and partner nature conservation and heritage bodies at a range of spatial scales;
- providing a new, non-technical community engagement tool that may easily illustrate processes of landscape change (or lack of change), and the challenges these can present over time.

The results of this study are likely to be of value to a range of organisations and individuals who have an interest in sustainable environmental management, planning and nature conservation and may:-

- encourage an improved understanding of the long-term impacts of change on vulnerable habitats;
- support understanding of changing patterns of land use and their effects on such sensitive sites over the last 250 years;
- allow us to observe species changes and their gains and losses;
- inform Landscape Character Assessments, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Plans and Biodiversity Action Planning.
- increase awareness of changes to the historic environment over time in support of the management of cultural heritage assets within the National Park.

2.3. Study Approach

In order to allow the most comprehensive use of the art resource the study has sought to demonstrate how a wide range of topographical, geomorphological, environmental and cultural heritage features have been illustrated over time; these have been compared with the present-day situation.



Figure 2.1: Map showing the location of Exmoor Nation Park. Courtesy: Exmoor National Park Authority

The nine selected case studies illustrate how art images can provide what can be sometimes the only records of landscape features, in full colour, since the late eighteenth century. There are several reasons for the focus on art in particular for this study. The medium of photography as a tool is far better recognised by the wide range of professionals involved with coastal and inland management, and because photographs largely represent a true record of past conditions, there are not generally issues relating to the accuracy of this medium. However, partly because of lack of information on the breadth of the art resource and concerns about whether artworks represent true depictions of the subject at the time they were painted, art has been much less used as a medium to explore the subject of changes affecting landscapes, habitats and species. An art ranking system that has been progressively developed by the author over the last ten years has highlighted watercolour drawings and lithographs in particular, as the most accurate and consequently valuable mediums in terms of illustrating scenery.

Museums, art galleries, local authority collections, archives and private collections throughout Great Britain contain a wealth of artistic images, whilst many others are contained in extensively illustrated topographical publications. Until recently, the availability of the art resource has been relatively unknown except for more famous works, which often hang on the walls of public art galleries. However, this situation changed in 2004 when an initiative by Dr Fred Hohler led to the foundation of a charity, *The Public Catalogues Foundation*, which was established to create a complete record of the national collections of oil, tempera and acrylic paintings in public ownership and to make them accessible to the public.

Of the 212,000 oil paintings in public ownership in the United Kingdom, around 80% of these are not on public view and many are held in storage without routine public access. *The Public Catalogues*

Foundation worked to rectify this through the publication, initially, of a series of well-illustrated colour catalogues (Ellis, from 2004⁶) and then, subsequently, to achieve the widest possible audience, all 212,000 paintings became available online through a collaboration, initially with the BBC, by 2012. Now operating in its own right as ArtUK (www.artuk.org) this charity provides the point of access to the nation's collection of oil paintings where works by some 40,000 painters, held in over 3,000 collections, are available for view online. Following the creation of ArtUK for the nation's oil paintings, Dr Hohler established a new charity in 2016, Watercolour World (www.watercolourworld.org/), under the joint patronage of HRH The Prince of Wales and HRH the Duchess of Cornwall. Watercolour World is a registered UK charity established to create a visual record of the world before photography by aggregating digital images of watercolours created up to the year 1900 on a single geographically indexed website.

This new initiative is particularly important for those interested in all aspects of environmental management because, by their nature, watercolours tend to allow very detailed images to be produced. An art ranking system that has been progressively developed by the author over the last ten years has highlighted watercolour drawings as one of the most accurate and consequently valuable mediums in terms of illustrating coastal scenery. The online art resources now available on these two websites have allowed access to thousands of oil paintings and watercolours, which were previously relatively unknown except to specialists; they are now available for research by the full range of professionals and the wider public who may have an interest in different aspects of environmental planning and management.

Watercolours represent a fragile art resource and their recording, preservation and dissemination in this way provides a new, unrivalled resource available for scientific purposes. In view of the fine detail of the watercolour painting technique this medium provides the opportunity to reappraise not just the physical changes that have affected our landscapes but also changes to the natural and built environments over the last two hundred and fifty years.

Alongside other art reference images such as engravings, aquatints and lithographs contained within illustrated topographical books, physical and developmental change since the 1770s can also be observed in full colour in watercolours and oil paintings being produced long before the introduction of even black and white photography. Recognising that a thorough understanding of long-term environmental change is fundamental to sustainable land management, this study, using art imagery, appraises changes that have affected Exmoor National Park over the last 250 years. Alongside the wealth of publicly available artworks the research task has also taken advantage of art images kindly loaned from private collections, art galleries, auction houses and local authority collections.

Certain key artistic tours of the coastline and the interior of North Devon form important benchmarks over time. These include coastal voyages and cross-country expeditions by some of our greatest topographical artists, as well as those who painted the developing coasts through Victorian and Edwardian times. Later, as tourism developed, some of these artists returned to paint the same spot many times allowing the plotting changes as seaside watering places, towns and villages expanded rapidly. The wealth of artworks produced in the nineteenth century including particularly the often highly accurate 'en plein air' portrayals of scenery by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and their many followers means that, combined with their interest in the emerging science of geology, these artworks represent a particularly rich resource for such a study.

The popularity of exploring the English countryside inspired by William Gilpin and others (Gilpin, 1786⁷) during the Napoleonic Wars and on into the Victorian period saw many 'County Books' and illustrated diaries being produced often richly illustrated with engravings or watercolour drawings (Swete, 1789⁸, Tugwell, 1855⁹, Page, 1890¹⁰). By comparing sequences of views through time,

alongside present-day photographs, it is possible to review changing landscapes over this extended period and to analyse and comment on the changes that have occurred. Such a review can support approaches to habitat management, inform landscape assessments and planning policies and development control for the future.

For the purposes of this study, the Exmoor National Park was explored and evaluated through study of the works of a number of key artists or artistic groups that form *benchmarks* spanning the study time period (1770-Present Day). These comprise:

- 1. Late eighteenth and early nineteenth century topographical artists, authors and diarists including Rev. J. Swete, William Daniell RA, William Payne, John White Abbott, Francis Towne and many others.
- 2. Works by Victorian landscape artists including the Pre-Raphaelites and their many followers. John Ruskin, a geologist and botanist by training, and one of the greatest art critics of the nineteenth century said in his Edinburgh lectures "Pre-Raphaelitism has but one principle, that of absolute, uncompromising truth in all that it does, obtained by working everything down to the most minute details, from nature and from nature alone" (Ruskin,1853¹¹).

On account of their focus on truth of depiction and artistic accuracy, the short-lived Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood but also particularly their followers, who painted up until the last decade of the nineteenth century, provide a rich resource of detailed views, painted in both oils and watercolour; some examples of their works are illustrated below.

- 3. Postcard artists including Alfred Robert Quinton's numerous watercolours (c.1900-c.1934), which were painted for reproduction as colour picture postcards and book illustrations by J. & F. Salmon Ltd of Sevenoaks, Kent. Quinton's watercolours are highly detailed and he re-visited many of the towns and villages as they expanded during the first three decades of the twentieth century, as well as painting celebrated beauty spots.
- 4. **Sporting Artists** who painted hunting and equestrian scenes set against the background of the uplands of Exmoor National Park. The most prominent of these artists were Sir Alfred Munnings, Lionel Edwards and Cecil Aldin.
- 5. Other twentieth century artists painting before the outbreak of the First World War and after the Second World War such as **David Addey** whose watercolours painted who between 1991 and 2005 retraced William Daniell's *Voyage Round Great Britain* (Daniell & Ayton, 1814-25¹²) painting the present-day view from the vantage points chosen by Daniell nearly two centuries before. (Addey, 1997¹³); and other post-war artists.
- 6. **Present Day Photographs** bring the sequence of views up to date and allow comparisons to be readily made to inform the findings of this study.

COASTAL VIEWS - FIGURES 2.2 - 2.7 'LYNMOUTH'





Above left: *Lynmouth* by Rev. J. Swete. 1796. Watercolour. Courtesy: Devon Archives & Local Studies. **Above right** *Lynmouth* by William Daniell RA. 1814. Aquatint. Private Collection.





Above left: Lynmouth from the Pier by George Rowe. c.1840. Lithograph. Private Collection. **Above right:** Mars Hill, Lynmouth by Alfred R. Quinton. 1925. Watercolour. Courtesy: Salmon's.





Above left: *Lynmouth* by David Addey. 1990.Watercolour. **Above right:** Lynmouth – Present day view.

COASTAL SCENERY



Figure 2.8: Valley of the Rocks near Lynton by Alfred Robert Quinton. 1825. Watercolour. Image courtesy Salmon's.

Figure 2.9 (Below): Castle Rock, Lynton, Valley of the Rocks today. Image: Creative Commons Licence.



MOORLAND SCENERY



Figure 2.10 (Above): Dunkery Beacon by F. J. Widgery in c1890.

Figure 2.11 (Below): A panoramic view from the Beacon. Image courtesy Tom Meaker/Shutterstock images.



CULTURAL HERITAGE





Figures 2.12 & 2.13: Selworthy Green, Somerset by A. R. Quinton 1920. Courtesy Salmon's and today.

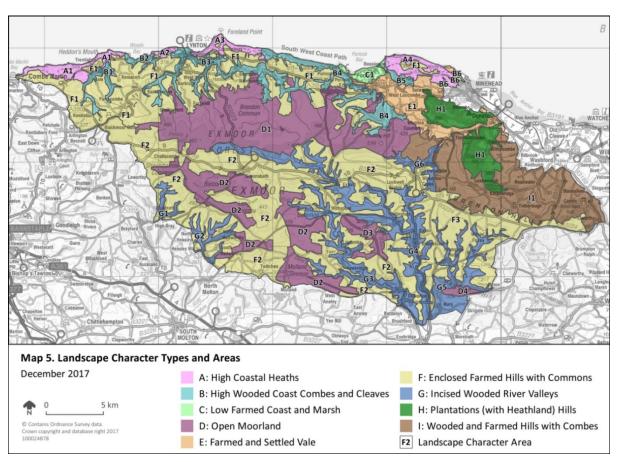
2.4. Case Studies

For the purpose of the study and following the methodology set out in the Exmoor National Park Landscape Character Assessment (Fiona Fyfe Associates⁵) it was decided that each of the nine Landscape Character Types (LCTs) would form excellent case studies allowing this study to compare readily with the Landscape Character Assessment.

Each of the nine case studies follows a similar, concise approach in terms of layout. The case study sites were described and evaluated under the following headings: Location; Why was this case study site selected? Summary of geology, geomorphology, processes and environment; How can the art imagery inform us of changes that have affected the case study site over time? and, finally, What are the key issues that can be learnt from this study site?

More detailed consideration of the emerging issues has been discussed in an 'Analysis' chapter, and from this Conclusions and Recommendations have been drawn. The Case Studies (Chapter 5) are:

- 5.1. High Coastal Heaths
- 5.2. High Wooded Coast, Combes and Cleaves
- 5.3. Low Farmed Coast and Marsh
- 5.4. Open Moorland
- 5.5. Farmed and Settled Vale
- 5.6. Enclosed Farmed Hills with Commons
- 5.7. Incised Wooded River Valleys
- 5.8. Plantation (with Heathland) Hills
- 5.9. Wooded and Farmed Hills with Combes



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Figure 2.15: Valley of the Lyn from Mars hill, Lynmouth by George Rowe. c.1835. Lithograph.

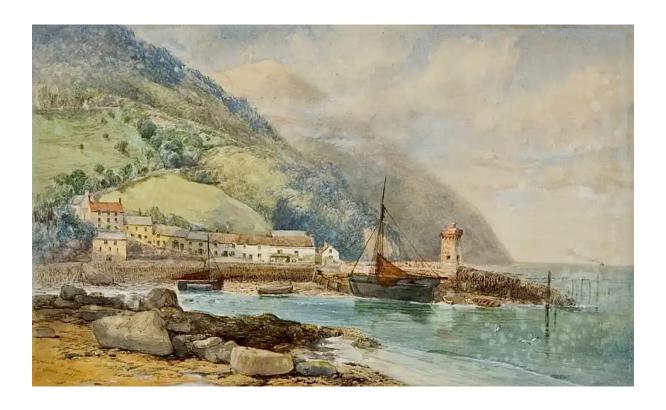


Figure 3.1: *Lynmouth* by Frederick Jones. 1865. Watercolour. Courtesy: Bristol Culture (Bristol Museum & Art Gallery).

Figure 3.2: On the Lyn by Frederick Jones. 1865. Watercolour.

Courtesy: Bristol Culture (Bristol Museum & Art Gallery).



3. The Portrayal of Exmoor National Park through Art Since 1770

3.1. An Introduction to Landscape Art

Landscape is a term used to describe the scenery and environment of the countryside and coastline. Landscape paintings depict the natural beauty of the landscape and of coastal environments, often encompassing a broad view of the coastline, the sea and the sky, together with elements such as the weather and human activities. The word *landscape* started to be used in the English language from the early seventeenth century and is derived from the Dutch word *landschap*, which means *an area of cultivated land*. Those landscape paintings which depict specific subjects such as parts of the coastline, buildings and structures, are called *topographical views* and are commonly seen in various types of prints (engravings, aquatints and lithographs) as well as in drawings, watercolour drawings and oil paintings (McInnes, 2014¹).

The origins of landscape painting date back to the fifteenth century when landscape scenery was incorporated in the paintings of early artists including Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1515) and Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528). Later, in the Netherlands, Pieter Brueghel the Elder (1525/30-1569) also developed stylised panoramas depicting life through the seasons, as well as the daily activities of residents of the countryside and coast. The interest in art in this country was accentuated by the desire of royalty, such as King Charles I (1600-1649) to collect works of art. During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wealthy young gentlemen were starting to travel more widely and they took the Grand Tour, gaining education and aesthetic inspiration from the classical remains and Renaissance art and architecture of Italy and Greece. Drawings began to be made out of doors and these would form the basis of the paintings that would start to depict the landscape in its true form.

In the eighteenth century English painting was influenced strongly by collectors and artists returning from the Grand Tour. However, later, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars prevented travel across large parts of Europe from 1789 until after the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. This led to an increased interest in the exploration and discovery of the more remote landscapes of the British Isles. In fact, from the middle of the eighteenth century, a number of British writers and travellers such as William Gilpin (1724-1804), sought to define and categorise human responses to natural phenomena such as landscape scenery. Gilpin was less concerned about the topographical accuracy of the scene than with capturing the atmosphere of a *picturesque landscape* (Gilpin, 1786²). An enlightened educationist, Gilpin defined picturesque as "that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture" and began to expand his principles of picturesque beauty through travels across the British Isles.

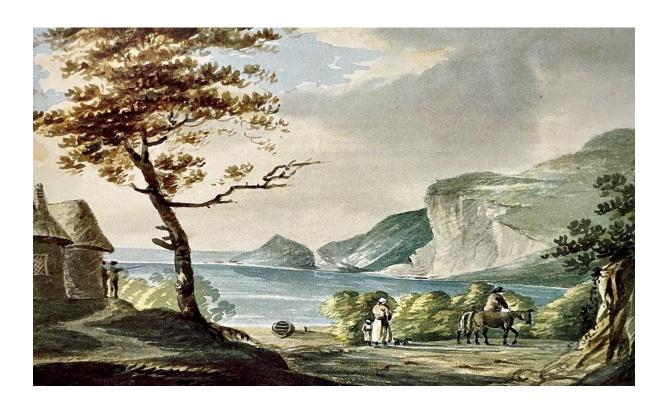
3.2. The Art of Exmoor National Park

Such tours resulted in a new-found appreciation of the wild and open landscapes that existed outside the cities. In the eighteenth century watercolour drawing became a popular medium and something of a speciality of English artists. Artists including Francis Towne (1739-1816) and John White Abbott (1763-1851) were leaders in the field of watercolour drawing; Abbott painted at Porlock in 1785 and Lynmouth in 1811. Thomas Gainsborough visited Lynton in about 1782 whilst the Rev. John Swete described and illustrated his extensive diaries with watercolour drawings of the Exmoor coastline and its interior. A decade later Thomas Rowlandson RA embarked on one of his numerous painting expeditions visiting Valley of the Rocks and painting a picnic scene on Exmoor. Other great names of the early school of watercolour painting who visited Exmoor included Paul Sandby RA (1725-1809), John 'Warwick' Smith (1749-1781) who captured a fine view *On the River Barle at Dulverton* and Joshua Cristall (1767-1847) who was a President of the Old Watercolour Society. Later, J. M. W. Turner RA (1775-1851), who continued the English tradition of taking artistic tours around parts of the country, including the North Devon coast producing numerous drawings including views of Combe



Figure 3.3 (Above): *Dulverton Bridge* by Rev. J. Swete. 1796. Watercolour. **Figure 3.4 (Below):** *Martinhoe* by Rev. J. Swete. 1796. Watercolour.

Images with kind permission of Devon Archives & Local Studies (DHC 564M/F/10)



Martin, Lynmouth and Minehead; some of which were subsequently worked up into major landscape paintings. The deeply incised river valleys of Exmoor were a favourite subject for romantic artists and interest was encouraged by the fine etched views by Frederick C. Lewis in his *Scenery of the River Exe* (Lewis, 1827³). The prolific Plymouth watercolourist William Payne (c.1760-1820) produced a series of over eighty views of the coastal scenery of Devon between 1790-1800 including a fine, extensive view of Lynmouth and the River Lyn in c.1820 and watercolours of Combe Martin and Lynton.

Along the north Devon and Somerset coasts fishing coves and hamlets were expanding into seaside resorts. Artists were particularly drawn to the dramatic upland and coastal scenery of Exmoor. This era of coastal landscape painting relied not just on the skills of the original artists in the field, but also a number of remarkably fine craftsmen, engravers and colourists, who produced illustrations through a range of techniques such as aquatint and lithography. Charles Napier Hemy RA RWS (1841-1917) was a follower of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and his work *Porlock Bay*, dated 1891, presents a typically fine view of the coastline. Edward William Cooke RA (1811-1880) took a keen interest in depicting the geology of the coastline with great accuracy and precision. The paintings he produced of the Devon coast such as *Porlock Weir* and *Blue Anchor Bay* to the east are considered to be highly accurate; according to his biographer "If Cooke painted or drew it, it is reliably correct" (Munday, 1996⁴).

On the Exmoor coast the harbours and developing villages, particularly, Porlock and Lynmouth, were painted in watercolour or oils by numerous artists. Fine paintings were produced by George Hillyard Swinstead RBA RI (1860-1926), James Holland RWS (1799- 1870), Peter De Wint (1784-1849), William Collins (1788-1847), David Cox (1783-1859), William Muller (1812 -1845), Albert Goodwin RWS (1845-1932) and Frederick J. Widgery (1861 – 1942).

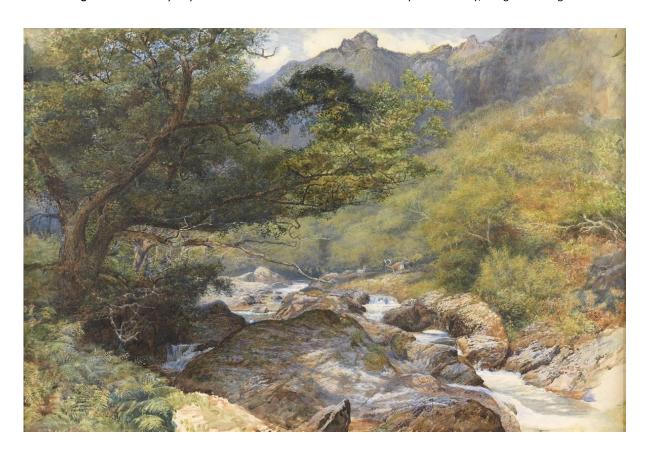


Figure 3.5: Porlock Weir by Edward William Cooke RA. 1862. Oil. Courtesy: Martyn Gregory Gallery



Figure 3.6: Porlock Bay by Charles Napier Hemy. 1891. Oil. Courtesy Maas Gallery/Bridgeman Images.

Figure 3.7: On the Lyn by W. H. Millais. c.1870. Watercolour. Courtesy Maas Gallery/Bridgeman Images.



These artists produced detailed views of the interior of Exmoor and the dramatic scenery of the coast and they found a ready market with these often relatively wealthy tourists. Purchasers were seeking images that provided an exact reproduction of the coastal views they had enjoyed so much. As a result, many fine and accurate topographical paintings were produced. Even after the introduction of photography in the late 1850s works of art were still required because it was to be many decades before the innovation of colour photography became widely used, and therefore, landscape paintings in full colour continued to fulfil an important role. In 1894 British publishers were granted permission by the Royal Mail to manufacture and distribute postcards, which could be sent through the post. Postcards produced between the 1890s and the 1920s often provided views of coastal scenery and the seaside resorts. Specially commissioned watercolour artists including Henry Wimbush (fl.1888-1904) and the prolific Alfred Robert Quinton (1852-1934) fulfilled the demand for illustrations, some of which provide accurate portrayals of conditions within the National Park at that time.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw steadily increasing numbers of tourists travelling to the south-west. This led to a greater demand for illustrated books alongside colour picture postcards depicting local scenes. Two artists, Henry Wimbush (1858-1943) and Alfred Robert Quinton (1853-1934), were particularly prolific in their production of attractive watercolours for publishers J. & F. Salmon of Sevenoaks and A. & C. Black; together they produced over two hundred watercolours of the region as book illustrations.

Other artists including Harold Sutton Palmer (1854-1933) and Ernest William Haslehust (1866-1949) provided illustrations for numerous colour plate regional guidebooks (Clinton-Baddeley, 1925⁵; Thomas *et al.*, c.1910⁶). Although such artists continued to flourish through selling their works for colour plate book illustrations the First World War had signalled an end to the public interest in detailed oil paintings and watercolours that were favoured by their Victorian predecessors. They were replaced by modern art, which saw less interest in topography as a subject. There were a few exceptions, for example, the railway poster artists such as the prolific Harry Riley (1895-1966) and later Eric Ravilious (1903-1942) and John Nash (1893-1977) and, importantly, sporting art.

On Exmoor sporting art continued to be a very popular subject largely as a result of three prolific and celebrated painters — Cecil Aldin (1870-1935), Lionel Edwards (1878-1966) and Sir Alfred Munnings (1878-1959). Many of their hunting and equestrian scenes are set against fine backgrounds of the Exmoor hill country and illustrated the nature of the landscape at the time thereby offering useful comparisons with the present day.

4.3. Illustrated Topographical Books

Descriptions of the landscape of Devon started to appear in the sixteenth century and these were often accompanied by woodcuts or copper plate engravings. A book which was only published in manuscript form, was entitled *Synopsis Corographical of the County of Devon* by John Hooker (Hooker, 1525-1601⁷). The manuscript contained a wealth of interesting topographical information. Later, Thomas Gerard's *Particular Description of the County of Somerset* (Gerard, 1633⁸) provides further information on the nature of the landscapes of the county at that time. John Collinson wrote *History and Antiquities of Somerset* in 1791-2. Published in three volumes, works of this kind provide supplementary information relating to the landscape and coastline at that time and in advance of the more detailed and illustrated books that were to follow (Collinson, 1792⁹).

Towards the end of the eighteenth century more books were starting to appear with topographical accounts. An example is *History of Devonshire* by John Aubrey, penned in three volumes (Aubrey, undated¹¹), and the *History of Devonshire* by the Reverend Richard Polwhele which was published in 1797 (Polwhele, 1797¹⁰). In the early nineteenth century *Magna Britannia* Volume 6 *Devon* (Lysons,

D. & S., 1822¹¹) was published. These were very comprehensive county studies, which also contained "sumptuous illustrations provided by a variety of artists, including Samuel Lysons himself" (Brayshay, 1996¹²).

William Daniell RA produced aquatint engravings of the Exmoor coast; his outstanding views are contained in his *Voyage Round Great Britain* (Daniell & Ayton, 1814-1825¹³). He had travelled along the north Cornwall, north Devon and Somerset coasts at the start of his voyage in 1814 when he engraved *Ilfracombe* and *Lynmouth* before travelling along the coast of South Wales.

By the early nineteenth century many of our greatest artists were making tours either at the request of wealthy patrons, or for their own commercial interest. Thomas Rowlandson, J. M. W. Turner and many others produced series of watercolour drawings, some of which formed elaborate publications (Cooke, 1826¹⁴). Through the nineteenth century increasing numbers of books appeared, first, often illustrated with copper plate or aquatint engravings and, later, steel engravings such as those by W. H. Bartlett, T. Allom and others in *Devon and Cornwall illustrated* (Britton & Brayley, 1832¹⁵). Steel plate books with the ability to allow longer print runs could cater for the increasing numbers of visitors to the north Devon coast and in fact Lynmouth was one of the most depicted British coastal towns.

In the 1830s and 1840s numerous exceptionally fine lithographs were produced by George Rowe and W. Spreat in particular; they were available for sale individually or in book form and included *Scenery in the North of Devon* by George Rowe and others (Banfield, c.1837¹⁶) and *Views of the Scenery in North Devon* by W. Spreat (Spreat, c.1850¹⁷).

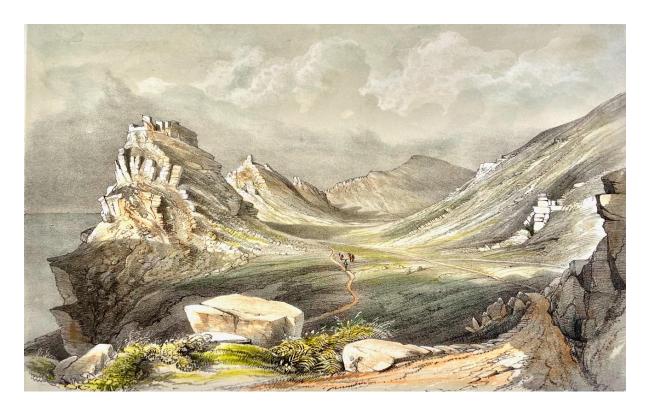


Figure 3.8: Valley of the Rocks by W. Spreat. c.1840s. Lithograph. Private Collection.

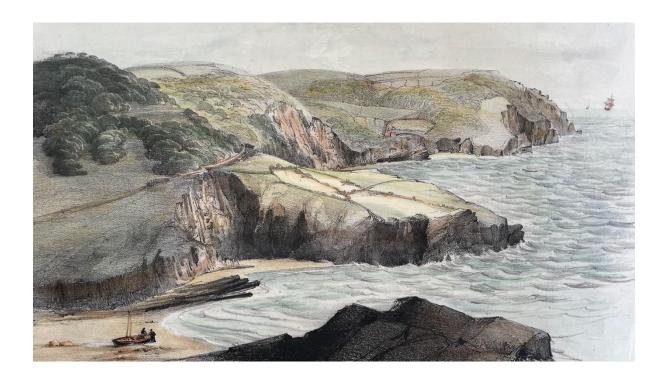


Figure 3.9: *Lee from Duty Point near Lynton* by George Rowe. c.1837. Lithograph. Private Collection.

Figure 3.10: *View from Valley of Rocks Hotel* by George Rowe. c1840s. Lithograph. Private Collection.



Apart from the topographical accounts of Devon described above further illustrations of the coastline in particular were provided from surveys of the sea coast. One of the first of these was *Great Britain's Coastal Pilot – A Survey of the Sea coast from the River Thames Westward and Northward Including the Islands of Scilly* by Captain Greenville Collins, Hydrographer to the King in 1753 (Collins, 1753¹⁸).

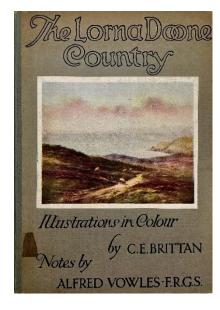
Such surveys were formalised from 1759 onwards following Admiralty instructions regarding the making of accurate observations of all parts of the British coastline. Many fine examples of these records are contained in the National Archives and comprise beautifully drawn coastline sections observed from the sea (National Archives, 2010¹⁹).

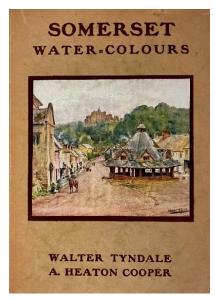
It should be noted that early maps also provide a wealth of information on coastal environments and cultural heritage. However, this study is examining art depictions. A detailed assessment of the importance of maps, their reliability and the information they can impart was undertaken as part of the Interreg IVA 2 Seas Arch-Manche project www.archmanche.maritimearchaeologytrust.org/.

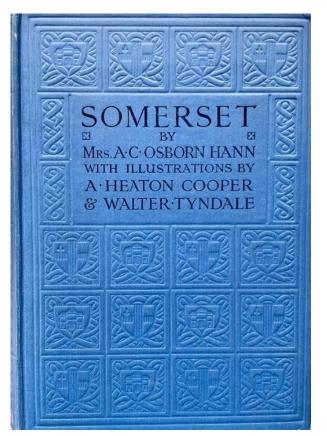
The relatively expensive guide books illustrated with steel engravings in the mid-nineteenth century could not be printed in sufficient numbers to meet the demands of increasing numbers of visitors. The invention of chromolithography in Germany and colour plate reproduction of paintings or watercolours to illustrate books allowed much larger print runs to be achieved. Publishers such as A. & C. Black in London commissioned authors and artists to write and illustrate books covering all parts of the European coast to meet the needs of the travelling public.

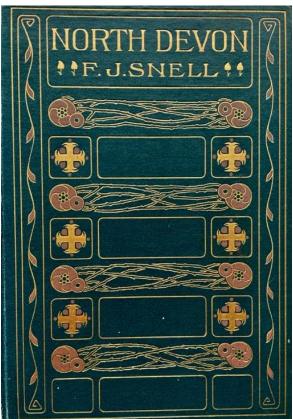
The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw steadily increasing numbers of tourists travelling to the south-west. This led to a greater demand for illustrated books and colour picture postcards depicting local scenes. Two artists, Henry Wimbush (1858-1943) and Alfred Robert Quinton (1853-1934), were particularly prolific in their production of attractive watercolours for postcard publishers J. & F. Salmon of Sevenoaks and book publishers A. & C. Black; together they produced over two hundred watercolours of the region as book or postcard illustrations.

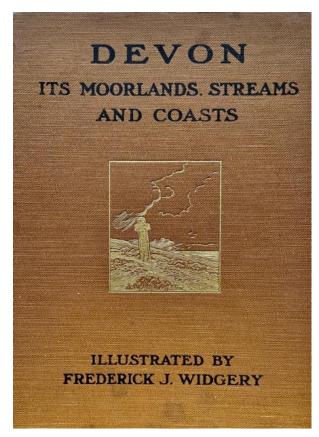
Other artists including Harold Sutton Palmer (1854- 1933) and Ernest William Haslehust (1866-1949) provided illustrations for numerous colour plate regional guidebooks Clinton-Baddeley, 1925⁵; Thomas *et al.*, c.1910⁶). The important volume on *Devon* by A. & C. Black (A. & C. Black, 1923²⁰) was written by Lady Rosalind Northcote and illustrated by Frederick Widgery whilst *'Somerset'* was written by Mrs A. C. Osborn Hann and illustrated by Alfred Heaton Cooper and Walter Frederick Tyndale (Osborn Hann, 1927²¹).











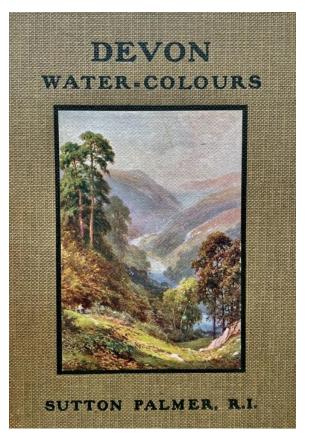


Figure 3.11: A selection of colour-plate books published by A. & C. Black in the early twentieth century and illustrated with watercolours by leading artists (also on page 26).



Figure 3.12: Mars Hill, Lynmouth by A. R. Quinton. 1920. Courtesy: Salmon's.

Figure 3.13: Cover of an illustrated guide to Lynton and Lynmouth published by Salmon's c.1925 and illustrated with watercolours by Alfred Robert Quinton.

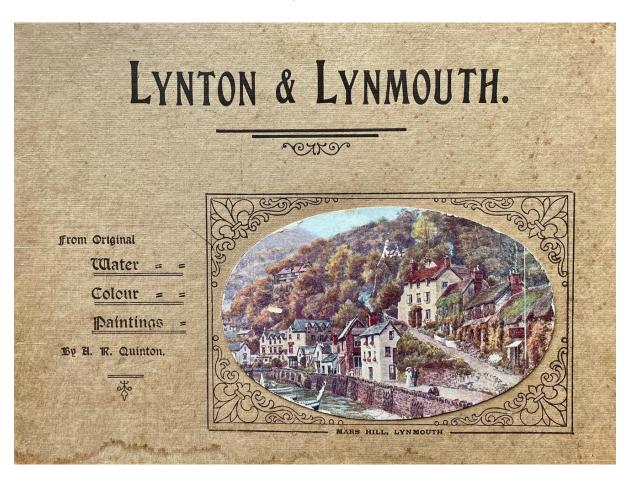




Figure 3.14: Lynmouth by Henry B. Wimbush. c.1910. Watercolour. Published by Raphael Tuck.

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