

HEDGEROW SURVEY

The Hedgerows Regulations (1997) protect countryside hedgerows. The criteria as to what constitutes a protected hedgerow are defined within the schedules to the regulations. The hedgerows below meet with this requirement, many based upon their existence prior to the Inclosure Acts of 1845.

Introduction

A number of sources of data both desk and field based were used to compile this list of hedgerows and veteran trees of significant biodiversity interest and which merit further ecological impact assessment should they be threatened by future development. It should however be noted that all boundaries including hedges and walls are classed as habitat.

These field surveys were based on general assessment techniques comprising a visual overview of condition and the number of woody species present as well as any other comments of note, such as banks and marker trees/stones rather than a formal ecological assessment.

Hedgerows were selected based upon the following criteria:-

- 1) Comparison of historical maps ( 1791Weld Estate map and 1838 Tithe Map) with modern Ordnance Survey maps showing pre-enclosure field systems which still exist.
- 2) Hedgerows observed to have a) seven 'woody' species as defined within the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and/or b) trees and hedgerows known to be important wildlife habitat for Red Data birds or other priority species.

1.Comparison of historical maps

Largely based upon research undertaken by Bill Egerton of the Sutton Poyntz History Group a number of hedgerows were identified that form modern day field boundaries and also exist in identical locations on late 18<sup>th</sup> (Weld Estate) and early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Tithe) maps. From a biodiversity perspective a mapping exercise has been completed which relates the woody species composition and key features of these hedges to their location on modern Ordnance Survey maps.

**A Wyndings to the Woodland below Spring Bottom at the base of West Hill**

Unmanaged and without a significant ditch or bank. Occasionally trimmed on the south side, the north side being difficult to access due to the steep sloping ground and narrow footpath access. The eastern end mainly consists of Elder and Blackthorn and is a narrow hedge perforated by small gaps at several points along its length. The western end is more outgrown and of similar composition with one large Ash, some small Hawthorn and Blackthorn (*Prunus*) on its northern side and less than 1% Hazel. It provides some cover and feed for small birds and small mammals.

**B. Morlands to Veterans Wood.**

A 3 metre wide hedge which has not been managed for many years but is kept trimmed. It is very spindly underneath and sits on a low bank with a ditch on either side. A mixed hedge consisting mainly of Hazel, Blackthorn (*Prunus*) , Willow and some Field Maple. Some veteran coppiced and layed ash trees towards the western end.

### **C. Hedgerow around triangular field to east of the copse below spring bottom.**

This field which is part of the SSSI has not been managed in recent years and as a result has become seriously overgrown with bramble over large areas, this having encroached to the boundary and access gates in a number of places. There are a number of small Hazel trees on the western boundary and some laying and coppicing work has been undertaken by the Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity Group in the woodland along this boundary since 2014. The eastern boundary consists of a mixture of veteran Ash, Hazel, Willow and a small quantity of Field Maple.

### **D. Field above the former Hunts Timber Yard known locally as Cuckoo Field.**

The east side has a low bank and ditch and is 2 metre wide with thinning and gaps in several places. The hedge consists mainly of Blackthorn (*Prunus*), Hazel and Elder with some Hawthorn. There is some Field Maple at the north end where the path deviates from the hedgeline and the ditch disappears. The hedge has been trimmed but not otherwise managed. A ditch with low bank continues on the north side with similar species plus some Dogwood and a very large ash tree in the centre. Much of the northern end of the west side was replanted circa 2011 by the Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity Group in order to replace diseased elms and has much Field Maple, Hazel, Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Dogwood. The southern section has some surviving European White Elm along with Ash, Hazel, Hawthorn and Field Maple. The vast majority of the south side has been removed to make way for residential and small scale industrial development. There are a number of areas of bramble incursion. The North and west sides are overgrown and have not been managed in recent years.

### **E. Very small area on the northern edge of Cuckoo Field attaching to the eastern side of the triangular field (C).**

This is a wet area with deep ditches and may once have been a well. A large Ash tree is located at the centre of the southern boundary and the remainder is overgrown with brambles and nettles, although this does provide good cover for birds and feeding areas for butterflies. Contains patches of Blackthorn.

### **F. Meadow immediately north of the Waterworks Car Park**

The northern side to the right of the wooden gate was re-planted with funding through the Dormouse Trust in 2010 with Oak, Ash, Hazel, Blackthorn (*Prunus*), Hawthorn, Guelder Rose and Field Maple and has produced a 1-2 metre dense hedge that provides good connectivity to mixed hedge containing Hazel. The Biodiversity Group have laid the hedge as part of a management plan in 2018.

That to the immediate west is a mix of Hazel, Hawthorn, Blackthorn and veteran Ash with some Field Maple.

The western boundary adjoining Veterans wood consists of a treeline of over 90% Hazel with small numbers of Ash, Hawthorn, Dog Rose and Field Maple and slight incursion by Bramble in places.

### **G. Osmington/Preston Parish Boundary (also the Weymouth and Portland/West Dorset boundary)**

This is a very old established boundary running north-south with marker stones, post and wire fence either side of a bank and ditch and consists of a mix of Hazel, Hawthorn and with smaller amounts of Blackthorn (*Prunus*), Elder and Willow. It is up to 2 metre wide, trimmed and without gaps other than at its northern end where it traverses the steep slope of East Hill past the 'White Horse' and consists of patchy Hawthorn scrub with large gaps in between the wind affected trees.

#### **H. Boundary to Sutton Close**

This has been largely removed over the years due to residential development and now consists of a variety of cultivars with a few remaining species from the original hedge such as Hazel and Hawthorn at the north east corner.

#### **I. Field to East of Permissive Path (camping field)**

The western boundary runs parallel to the track and has a width of around 2 metres and no bank with a ditch on the track side. It is a mixed Blackthorn (*Prunus*) and Hazel hedge with small amounts of Hawthorn, Ivy and Bramble and is particularly well frequented by small birds. There are a few small Hazel trees along its length. It is kept trimmed.

The eastern side is around 1.5 metre wide principally of Blackthorn (*Prunus*) with some Ash and Field Maple and a few young Beech trees to the northern end of this section.

The northern boundary is 2 metre wide with a ditch on the north side and is kept well trimmed. There are a few gaps, with no large trees and it consists mainly of Blackthorn (*Prunus*) with a variety of other species in small sections, principally some Dogwood, Field Maple, Ivy, Bramble, Dog Rose, Honeysuckle, Elder and Hawthorn. The hedge provides very good cover for small birds.

The southern boundary consists mainly of Blackthorn (*Prunus*) and Hawthorn with some small amounts of Field Maple and Elder. One substantial Oak is sited midway along the boundary.

#### **J. Field immediately east of Field I**

The northern boundary is a continuation of that associated with Field I above and is of much the same composition with a larger area of Willow at one end. Trimmed. It shares a dividing hedge with the above field to the west.

The southern boundary consists mainly of Willow and Field Maple with some Hawthorn, Alder and Hazel and has been trimmed.

The eastern boundary is kept trimmed and the hedge sits on a low bank with a shallow ditch to the northern side. The hedge is composed mainly of Blackthorn (*Prunus*), particularly to the south end, along with some Willow and Hawthorn.

#### **K. Long field immediately east of Field J.**

The northern boundary is a continuation of Field J and is of similar composition with Dogwood and Bramble in parts. This has been kept trimmed.

#### **L. Field south of Osmington Brook adjoining permissive track to Winslow Hill/Preston Road.**

This consists of a mixed hedge of mainly Willow and Blackthorn (*Prunus*) with small quantities of Field Maple, Hawthorn and Ash. It is 1.5 to 2 metre wide, set on a low bank with a ditch on the non-enclosed sides. It provides some cover for birds, the field to the east being well frequented by winter feeding and migratory birds such as Redwing, Whinchat and Linnet.

#### **M. Field to south west of Sutton Farm**

The North East boundary bordering the track consists of a hedge of over 2m width on a low bank with a ditch on one side. There is evidence of old laying and coppicing although only limited trimming has taken place in recent years. The primary species forming the thick hedge are Elder, Blackthorn (*Prunus*) and Hawthorn. There is some old coppiced Hazel with patches of Ivy, Honeysuckle and Bramble. The western side consists mainly of Blackthorn (*Prunus*) and Hazel with some Bramble outgrowth. The south side has no ditch and the hedge is 4m wide at its western end, this section being populated with Elder, Hawthorn, Blackthorn (*Prunus*), Willow and Ivy.

#### **N. Field forming boundary to rear of gardens on Sunnyfields.**

Much of this is inaccessible as it now forms part of residential gardens and appears to have been largely grubbed out and replaced with cultivars including conifers. The eastern boundary does have a number of established Ash, Field Maple, Hawthorn, Grey Willow and Beech.

#### **O. Field bordering the River Jordan south of the green wedge.**

The northern boundary consists of Hawthorn with an Ash tree at the north west corner. The eastern boundary consists of a mix of small amounts of Willow, Beech and Maple and appears to have been grubbed out at its southern end to provide access to residential property. There are Willow, Hazel and Ash along the southern boundary. The western side fringes the River Jordan, the banks being lined with small amounts of recently planted Willow. The hedge appears unmanaged.

### **2. Other important hedgerows and treelines of biodiversity value.**

#### **AA. Footpath between Puddledock Lane and Mill Lane.**

This is a very old right of way evident on the Weld Estate Map of 1791 and the Tithe Map of 1838 and for the first 25 metres when entering from Puddledock Lane there are several veteran Ash trees on the east side which have been coppiced in the past. The remainder on both sides of the footpath have been removed and replaced with non-indigenous species in the past and residential development on the west side has removed all traces of any veteran hedge.

#### **BB. Along the line of Osmington Brook in the small pasture at the rear of The Stables**

Numerous outgrown trees including a number of veteran Ash with older Hawthorn to the western end.

#### **CC. Copse west of Sutton Farm**

A wet woodland copse up to 30 metres wide with a stream running through and artificial pond at the northern end. The well established dense and outgrown broadleaved mix of Ash, Hazel, Hawthorn, Willow and Blackthorn with some large Oak provides excellent shelter for arable and grassland birds including key species such as Common Bullfinch and Song Thrush. Other priority species such as Starling along with winter visitors such as Redwing and Fieldfare are regularly observed in the adjacent fields.

#### **DD. Hedge along west side of field from Morlands in a southerly direction to field gateway adjacent to Fellside.**

An older mixed hedge of over seven woody species including Blackthorn (*Prunus*), Ash, Hazel, Hawthorn, Field Maple, Dogwood, Willow along with some Bramble. The hedge which is kept trimmed is over 1 metre wide and sits on a half to one metre high bank with a ditch on the field side. Better connectivity for example with wooden gates and some additional planting would create favourable dormouse habitat.

## **EE. Plaisters Lane**

Amongst the residential development on both sides of Plaisters Lane there are remnants of fruit trees from orchards which were 'grubbed out' in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to make way for residential development. There are also several indigenous species from the original coppiced woodland which include Ash along with Hawthorn and Elder, a good example being the Ash trees on both sides of Plaisters Lane near 'Willowdene'.

## **FF. Puddledock Lane between Sutton Road and The Cottage.**

The eastern end forms an important corridor for Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Serotine bats due to the proximity of the River Jordan and tree canopy formed along the lane. A coppiced tree (*Populus* sp.) unusual in Dorset is located here alongside the stream. Although populated by a number of cultivars some re-planting with indigenous species has been carried out on the south side from the allotments (Herbies Garden) to the junction with Sutton Road, consisting mainly of Hawthorn with a variety of other species including Ash, Goat Willow, Beech, Alder and Elder along with the rarely found Hops. The hedgeline on the north side of Puddledock Lane bordering fields adjacent to Sutton Farm surrounds an old drainage ditch and has much Bramble and Elder along with small amounts of Hazel, Willow, Dogwood and Oak and some large Ash trees to the rear boundary. This provides dense cover for small birds including an established population of House Sparrow, a red data bird.

## **GG. Line of trees alongside Osmington Brook and the southernmost public footpath to the Parish Boundary.**

A substantial overgrown mix of Blackthorn (*Prunus*) and Willow with veteran Ash. This provides excellent cover for migratory and winter feeding birds such as Redwing and Linnet which flock in the surrounding arable fields. The narrow corridor between this treeline and the hedge to the immediate north create an ideal habitat for overwintering birds.

## **HH. Hedgeline to the south of the River Jordan on the southern side of Puddledock Lane.**

A relatively recent mix of Hawthorn, Willow and Hazel which provides some bird cover and a separation between Puddledock Lane and the Green Wedge to the south. Bats (Pipistrelle and Natterers) have been regularly recorded along this corridor by the Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity Group

## **II. Veteran coppiced ash tree on the right hand side of the drive to Limoncello, Plaisters Lane.**

This is the remains of an old corner marker for an agricultural hedge and may provide suitable habitat for bats and invertebrates. Connectivity to the south is maintained for a short distance by a stretch of Willow terminating in Field Maple before modern cultivated hedging intervenes.

## **JJ. Hedgeline adjacent to the northern side of the South West Coast Path along the top of West Hill.**

Although composed of Bramble and Elder with less than 1% Hawthorn and having large gaps covered by low lying scrub along its length there is a 100 metre approx. length of outgrown Broom, Bramble, Hawthorn and Elder immediately above where the sheep path from the beacon joins. These combined areas provide important cover for threatened bird species such as Yellow Hammer and Corn Bunting which forage on the arable fields to the immediate north.

**KK. Veteran trees in the northernmost woodland in the SSSI area (see report by J Newbould, 2004 and Biodiversity Report 2009 by D.Emery, J Newbould and J Campbell for the Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity Group)**

Area of wet woodland containing Alder and Birch with a number of veteran Oak, Ash and Field Maple along with many coppiced Hazel. A springwater stream runs flows the length of the wood and together with a small part artificial pond at the northern end forms an important foraging and potential roosting area for bats including Myotis species (unpublished reports by Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity Group and the 2013 bat survey commissioned by Wessex Water plc ). Management of this area continues through co-operation between the Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity Group and the landowners, Wessex Water plc.

**LL. Narrow Copse of trees to the east of Sutton Farm and west of Old Bincombe Lane.**

A narrow strip of established trees mainly of Ash with some Oak and Willow that form important shelter for a variety of birds that feed on the adjacent pasture and arable fields as well as for mammals such as fox, badger and roe deer. Common Pipistrelle and Serotine bats are known to emerge and feed in the surrounding area and these trees also provide significant tree roost potential.

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