
PARISH HEDGEROW SURVEY

The Plant-life organisation launched it's Great Hedge Project in 1993. The first stage of this project is to survey the condition of the hedges along the boundary of as many Parishes as possible. Many Parish boundaries are very old indeed, and it is hoped that this approach will yield information on some of the oldest and most important hedges in the country.

The survey highlighted the rich variety of Parish hedges, and the rapid changes in woody plants along some hedgerows. Surprisingly, some hedges in the North East part of the Parish are still rich in Elm and in one or two places young shoots are being allowed to grow up into trees. The most common hedgerow plants are Hawthorn and Blackthorn, but Holly, Ash, Field Maple, Hazel, Oak, Willow and Elm are common with Privet, Sycamore, Bird Cherry and Elder in some places.

Carlton village boundary was surveyed in September and was found to be easily followed on the ground. Although a large number of hedges have been removed in this area, less than 10% of the Parish boundary has been affected. This may be because many of the ditches along the parish boundary are fed by springs which run for most of the year. The condition of the hedges along the Parish boundary ranges from relict through regularly clipped to grossly overgrown.

In other parts of the country it has been found that the number of woody species growing along a thirty yard length of a hedge often gives a rough idea of the age of the hedge in hundreds of years. The hedge along the west side of Nailstone Road is one of the richest in species with one thirty yard section containing Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Holly, Oak, Ash, and Field Maple with Elder and Dog Rose. The presence of six non invasive native woody species suggests that this hedge could be 500 years old. Further along, the same hedge contains Willow and Hazel. The overgrown hedges along Bufton Lane and Barton Road are also rich in species, but include Sycamore which is a more recent invader. The overgrown hedges along the north side of Congerstone Lane opposite Bank Farm contains many different species, but may have been a Victorian planting.

Parish Clerk