

Inkberrow Millennium Green Hedgerow Survey

A survey of the six hedges, labelled 1 to 6 on the accompanying map, was carried out by Elliot Mowbray and Wendy Johnson on 9th and 10th September 1999. The shrub and tree species present in all the hedges were identified and recorded along with the general state of the hedgerows. With the exception of the short hedge between the moat and the road (5) they are generally of poor quality with few species present. There were two trees worthy of note: the **Worcester Black Pear** and a good specimen of a **Wyche Elm** further up in the same hedgerow (1). Some young suckers or seedlings of the Wyche Elm are present in the Millennium Green field and these might be worth preserving or even moving to another hedgerow. In the hedge (2) along the top of the site there is a good stool of **Hazel** which has been coppiced in the past – the only occurrence of Hazel in this hedge.

None of the field hedges have been cut or managed for many years so that they have become rows of trees and tall bushes with very little growth near the base – apart from the bramble which in some places is all that remains to form a barrier. There are also very many gaps varying from under half a metre to many metres. There is very little ground flora due to shading, (although at this time of year it is not possible to see what might have been present in Spring which is when significant species like bluebell and dog's mercury occur). Planting up the gaps in the southern edge of hedge (2) might be difficult because of the shade from the large **Ash** trees and because it is very dry at the base of the hedge.

Thirty metre stretches of each hedge (one or two depending on the total length) were selected 'at random' determined mainly by the height of the nettles and the size of the bramble thorns! These were surveyed in more detail to give a 'species count' as used in the standard method of hedge dating devised by Hooper. As a rule of thumb he suggested one species per hundred years but this does not seem to work very well in Worcestershire. Of more value is to know which species are present, in particular if there are woodland species such as dogwood or woodland (Midland) hawthorn. These are more likely to indicate an old hedgerow and a good variety of species is of much more value for wildlife. With the possible exception of the moat hedge (5) none of the hedges show any characteristics of old hedges (in spite of counts of up to 4 per 30 metres). In fact hedges (1) and (2) are not shown on the Inclosure map of 1817.

The same stretches were also used to make an estimate of the proportion of each shrub and tree species, and gaps, present; bramble was included where it was all that formed the 'hedge' at a particular point. Hedges (1), (2) and (3) appear to have been planted as single species hawthorn hedges. Hedge (4) along the garden boundary is a recently planted pure beech hedge. Only the moat hedge (5) can be described as a mixed hedge. We did not find any oak at all and would like to see some planted in the new hedges along with a variety of shrubs typical of hedges in this area. All the hedges belonging to the Millennium Green site need reducing in height, ideally by laying or coppicing.

WEJ Sept 1999

NB

*It is not a black pear. It was identified as **Newbridge** by John Edgeley but there is still some doubt about the variety.*

The large Wyche elm eventually succumbed to Dutch elm disease but there are still suckers at the northern edge of the site.

Inkberrow millennium Green Hedgerow Survey

Summery table of results

Hedge number	1	2	3	4	5	6
Total length approx m	130	140	100	50	45	75
Av no. Species per 30m	4	4	3.5	1	8	3
% various species						
Hawthorn	57	56	40	0	20	25
Elder	25	8	18	0	0	1
Ash	0	13	2	0	4	0
Elm	8 Wych	0	0	0	35 Eng	0
Hazel	0	3	0	0	5	0
'Plum' prunus sp *	0	0	5	0	4	0
Rose	7	5	0	0	1	0
Pear	1	0	0	0	0	0
Beech	0	0	0	100	0	0
Field Maple	0	0	0	0	22	0
Sycamore	0	0	0	0	1	1
Wild privit	0	0	0	0	8	0
Bramble (%=on own)**	lots	8	some	little	some	33
GAPS	2	7	35	0	0	40

* excluding blackthorn – no blackthorn was found

** in some hedges bramble grew through other shrubs but in some places bramble alone formed the 'hegde' and is thus recorded as a %.

Bramble is not included by Hooper in his dating method although rose is.

Location of
hedges surveyed
in 1999

