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**ENVIRONMENTAL (ECOLOGY) SURVEY**

# An environmental survey at Blandford St.Mary

R216



Oak tree in the SE hedge

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The arable field south of the Dorchester road (A3540 as it leaves the roundabout at Blandford St.Mary is under consideration for development. This report describes the result of a survey on 21 Oct 2013 and discusses the environmental issues that might be of concern. The species found are listed in table 1.

## 2 DESCRIPTION of the SITE

The site is the field located to the south of the roundabout at the on the bypass at Blandford St.Mary (figure 1). It is a single arable field surrounded by hedges. At the time of the survey it had been cropped, ploughed and treated with herbicide. As a consequence there were no plants growing in the field except around a pole for the overhead power line and within a clump of trees at grid reference ST885052 and clearly visible in the aerial photograph (fig.1).

Despite evidence of herbicide drift, the hedges are intact. In table 1 the more prominent species in the hedges have been listed in columns headed by the compass points from the centre of the field. All of the hedges have a very poor understorey, often no plants visible other than ivy. The hedge along the south side of the A354 was planted when this road was built as part of the bypass. It is the least diverse, being mainly hawthorn and lacking mature trees. On the NE side, where the A350 goes to Poole the short hedge is mainly of elm regrowth and bramble. The SE and SW hedges are more diverse and have a few large trees – oak and ash. At the junction of these hedges is a large grey poplar with a few younger trees.

Near the west end of the field is a circle of twelve mature lime trees and a sparse ground flora within the clump. The only other concentration of plants within the field is around the power line pole near the east end of the field. On the bare soil are a few toadstools identified as *Volvariella speciosa*, a species that is not uncommon where there is rotting straw.

The only animals seen were a few rabbits, two roe deer and occasionally pigeons and crows flying overhead.

## 3 ASSESSMENT

The field contained no visible wildlife of conservation interest. The lime clump has very few species and these are all widespread and common nationally. It is, however, a prominent feature.

The hedges do not appear to contain any rare or legally protected species. Although a formal assessment was not made, the hedges are probably not species rich enough to fall within the definition of an important hedge (Hedgerow Regulations 1997). Hedges are refuges for all manner of animals, some of which are protected species. During spring and summer birds will nest within the hedge and the large trees are possible roosts for bats, although none is typical of the type used. Slow worms are ubiquitous but other reptiles and amphibians are very unlikely to present. If the hedges will not be affected by the development there should be no need for further investigation. Any proposed removal or alteration of a hedge should be considered in light of the foregoing comments.

R.M.Walls,  
23<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2013



**Table 1. Plants recorded, 21 Oct 2013**

Columns for the principal species in each hedge and the clump of trees in the field

Scientific Name	vernacular name	NW	NE	SE	SW	lime clump
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	x	x			
<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	Barren Brome					
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Arctium minus</i>	Lesser Burdock	x				x
<i>Avena sterilis</i>	winter wild oats					
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Soft Brome					
<i>Ceratochloa cathartica</i>	Rescue brome					
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle		x			
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle					
<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Traveller's-joy	x		x	x	
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel		x	x		
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	x	x	x	x	
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot					
<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	Common Couch					
<i>Festuca gigantea</i>	Giant Fescue					x
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash		x	x		
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	x	x	x	x	
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill					
<i>Geranium pyrenaicum</i>	Hedgerow Crane's-bill					
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens					x
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Common Ivy	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed					
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog					
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly		x			
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle					
<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	Red Dead-nettle					
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	Nipplewort					
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not		x			
<i>Populus x canescens</i>	Grey Poplar			x	x	
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn				x	
<i>Quercus robur</i>	oak		x			
<i>Rosa canina agg.</i>	wild rose		x	x		
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble	x	x	x	x	
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock					
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	x	x			
<i>Sinapis arvensis</i>	Charlock		x			
<i>Sisymbrium officinale</i>	Hedge Mustard					
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Smooth Sow-thistle					
<i>Tilia x europaea</i>	Lime					x
<i>Ulmus procera</i>	elm	x	x	x	x	
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Wayfaring-tree	x				

Figure 1. The site



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