

Heritage Services

# The Cutting Hedge of Biodiversity



*exploring the  
natural heritage  
of hedgerows*



Supported by the  
Heritage Lottery Fund



# HOORAY FOR HEDGES

## Why are hedgerows important?

Hedgerows are among the most important and recognisable features of the English countryside, outlining fields and marking parish boundaries. They are an essential part of our landscape. Hedgerows are great places for wildlife too! Britain was once well wooded, and much of the animal and plant life of our countryside originally lived in woodlands. With woodland removal, animals sought refuge elsewhere. Hedgerows are one of the major habitats into which they moved, and are more important for wildlife than is generally realised. They act as wildlife reservoirs, providing food and shelter, often in otherwise barren arable landscapes. They can be thought of as long thin strips of woodland, often being centuries old. They contain hundreds of plant species that provide food and shelter for many different animals, from badgers to birds and rare butterflies.

### *The French Connection*

*Although hedges are thought of as being quintessentially British, they are also found in Normandy, where they are known as Bocage. Hedges can also be found in Northern Italy, Austria, the United States of America and even in the Andes in Peru.*

Hedgerows are also known as 'nature's corridors', because they act as pathways that can connect important wildlife sites.

Animals can travel in relative safety within the shelter of these 'natural highways'.

*Around 1900 Leicestershire was known as the 'Queen of the Grassy Shires', as 86% of farming land was permanent pasture, with enclosed fields for cattle. Even though the landscape has changed greatly Leicestershire still has an estimated 16,000 km of hedgerow.*

Grass verges bordering hedgerows offer some of the few remaining places in the countryside where the seeds of wildflowers are able to germinate and take root. Many species of bird also rely on hedges for food and nesting.



*A 'good' hedge with a ditch and grass verge*



***Hedgerows help support an estimated 80% of woodland birds and up to 50% of British mammals and 30% of butterflies.***

This booklet will help you to discover more about these fascinating habitats and why we should ensure their conservation for the future. They are part of the rich cultural and natural heritage of the British landscape, being significant not only for wildlife, but people too. Hedgerows have provided food and firewood, and stop soil erosion.

***Hedges are the preferred home of 47 endangered types of wildlife which are of concern to conservationists in the UK, 13 of which are globally threatened species. Hedgerows are one of the Government's 14 target habitats in the National Biodiversity Action Plan.***

## WHAT IS A HEDGEROW?

A row of closely cropped woody shrubs would be most people's view of what a hedgerow is. The true practical definition of a hedge is 'a boundary, living or dead, that is stock-proof'.

What is meant by a 'hedge' varies; turf or stone banks; lines of shrubby hawthorns; traditional species rich mixed hedgerows; laid hedges; "dead" hedges - they

all mark boundaries of some sort. A hedge or hedgerow is linked to the history of agriculture and land ownership. They were planted when farmers needed to mark boundaries, plant crops or keep livestock.

***Our words 'hedge' and 'hedgerow' come from the Anglo-Saxon *haga*, *hege* and *hegeroewe*, which have the same meaning as our modern hedge.***

This booklet is about wild hedges, not ornamental ones in gardens. An ideal wild hedge should be big and thick and have plenty of trees in it. The plants and shrubs in the hedge would ideally be native (species that grow naturally in Britain). Native shrubs and trees provide berries, nuts and seeds that birds and animals can feed on throughout the year, but especially before winter arrives.

## THE LIVING LINK

### Early hedges

Hedgerows form a living link with our past and can tell us much about the history of land use in this country. Their primary function was, and still is, to create boundaries for farming or land ownership. Parish boundary hedges, which are often the oldest and most important for wildlife, were often based on church jurisdiction.



The earliest record of a hedge in England comes from 547 AD, but this was a dead hedge. This 'dead hedge' was constructed from cut branches, woven between stakes pushed into the ground. This type of 'dead hedge' would gradually have been colonised by live shrubs to form a hedge as we know it today.



*An example of a 'dead hedge'*

Hedges were also formed when woodland was initially cleared for farming. Individual fields would be cleared leaving strips of woodland, as a hedgerow, surrounding the fields. In fact the Old English of field is *feld*, literally an area of felled trees. This process known as assarting, produced hedgerows rich with wildlife.

Hedges that follow the former outline of a woodland are known as 'woodland ghosts'. These relic woodland hedges can be identified by the typical native woodland species they contain. This includes species such as hazel, dogwood and midland

hawthorn, and flowers such as dog's mercury, wood anemone, primrose and bluebell. One such example was found in the industrial centre of Coventry. A very overgrown 45 metre stretch of small-leaved lime, backing onto a factory, was traced back to a woodland that was cleared in the 18th century.

Anglo-Saxon estate boundaries were often marked with hedgerows, many of which still mark some parish boundaries today. These can often be over 1000 years old! That means some hedges were around before the end of the first Millennium AD.

While today hedges are used by farmers to prevent their sheep and cattle from escaping, during the Middle Ages they were also used as fences to protect crops from deer and wild boars and livestock from the wolves and bears that then roamed the English countryside.

### **The great enclosures**

The English landscape is constantly changing and has often been drastically altered. The most significant event in recent centuries was the enclosure of 7 million acres of open land with hedgerows.

Before 1600 large areas of countryside had a communal 'open' farming system in place. Most areas of a parish would be common land, meaning it could



be farmed by all the inhabitants. The land was divided up into unfenced strips, with individuals responsible for their own patch.

This method of farming meant large fields with long irregular hedgerows. Since a large turning area was needed, when ploughing with teams of oxen, a reversed S-shaped or C-shaped strip often developed, following the line that was ploughed. The boundary hedges that grew followed these shapes.



*Snow highlights the pattern of ridge and furrow*

The 'open' field system of farming had taken place in parts of Britain for over a thousand years. Then between 1603 and 1850, 5000 Acts of Parliament were passed, which forced the enclosure of common land with hedges and ditches. This meant a drastic change to large parts of the English countryside, and of the way that farmers worked. Each farmer had to enclose their land with a hedge or fence within one year of the Act being passed.

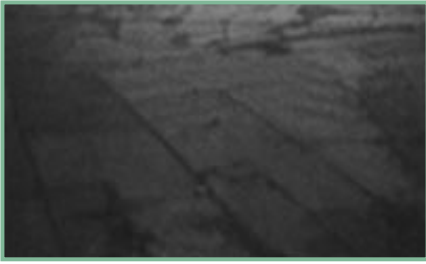
Over 200,000 miles of hedgerows were planted during the time of the Enclosure Acts. These hedges sometimes replaced older boundary hedgerows. In some places in the Midlands hedges can be seen cutting across ridge and furrow grass fields. Ridge and furrow is a remnant of the pre-enclosure farming system

***It took over one billion (1,000,000,000) shrubs to create the new hedges of enclosures.***

A 17th century book 'Systema Agriculturae' set out guidelines for hedge planting; 'The Whitethorn' (hawthorn) is esteemed the best for hedges: it is raised either of seeds or plants, but by plants is the speediest way. Let your plants be about the bigness of your thumb, if you can and set almost perpendicular. The plants being young should be carefully fenced with a dry hedge, from the biting of cattle on both sides, until the tops are quite out of their reach: and it is good husbandry to plant setters (young trees) at some convenient intervals, either of timber trees proper to the soil, or of crab-apples and pear-stocks, which will very much improve the land for the future and commend the industry of the planter'.

The main shrub used in hedgerows, at this time, to enclose the fields was hawthorn,





*Newer hedgerows can be seen cutting across the older ridge and furrow*

although blackthorn was sometimes used. Hawthorn was also known as quick or quickthorn, due to its fast growth-rate, which made it a hedgerow favourite.

Enclosure hedgerows are often easier to spot on modern maps, due to their very straight regular lines. These newer hedges are generally not as rich in wildlife, but are over 200 years old and are still a valuable wildlife habitat. Older countryside hedges are irregular and follow the curves of the land.

## HEDGES AND WILDLIFE

Due to the loss of other wildlife habitats, hedgerows have become more important for wildlife in recent years. Woodland species especially, are more common in hedgerows than they used to be. Many species of bird, mammal and insect are dependent on hedges to survive. A hedge is not just a line of shrubs, but a home to many plants and animals.

The more connections a hedgerow has to other hedgerows or other features, such as ponds or woodland, the more important it is for wildlife.

## Feathered friends

Well managed hedgerows, which are wide and tall, provide birds with food year-round, good nesting sites and song posts during the breeding season. Yellow hammers, blackbirds and chaffinches will all sing from the top of the hedge, whilst wrens and dunnocks (the hedge sparrow) will sing from the bottom of the hedge, where they nest. Almost all of our red-legged and grey partridges nest in the hedge bottom and feed in and around hedgerows.



*Chaffinches bring colour and sound to the hedgerow*



***Owls, kestrels and sparrowhawks will hunt for smaller birds, mammals and insects around hedges.***

Other wildlife friendly places, such as, large hedgerow trees, adjacent grass fields or grass margins make a hedge even better for birds. A wider range of food will be available and the birds are less likely to be disturbed by human activities.

### ***Bird Bonanza***

***Over 60 different types of birds nest in hedges from the tiny wren to the marauding magpie.***

## **Animals**

Hedgerows provide both shelter and food for a range of twenty species of mammal, reptile and amphibian. Even frogs and toads benefit from the food and shelter provided by hedges. Toads spend more than half of the year out of water, with a damp hedge bottom providing an ideal place for hibernation. Mammals, such as voles, mice, shrews, badgers and the aptly named hedgehog will find insects and vegetation to eat.



*A bank vole*

Carnivores, such as foxes, stoats and weasels will prey on the smaller animals making use of the hedgerow. A wide grass margin, especially with tussocky vegetation, will make the hedgerow even more suitable for small mammals. The long grass provides cover, so they are able to evade predators.

Holes at the base of hedgerows are often the entrances to animals homes such as badger setts and fox earths. Holes for smaller mammals, such as voles and long-tailed fieldmice may also be seen. In older hedgerows rabbit warrens can also be found.

***The name hedgehog seems to have come into use around 1450. Shakespeare called them 'hedgepigs' and 'urchins' in his plays the Midsummer's Night Dream and the Tempest. Today, hedgehogs are found everywhere, not just in hedgerows.***

## **Insects and minibeasts**

Butterflies use hedgerows throughout the seasons from bathing in summer sunshine to sheltering in the winter.

***The word butterfly comes from the original name for the brimstone - butter coloured fly.***

Butterflies need specific plants for their feeding or breeding cycles.



- Brimstones need buckthorn, as a food source for the caterpillars. The buckthorn is a hedgerow shrub, but is not very common. It is curious that the brimstone is seen more often than its foodplant.
- The Holly blue has two life stages in a year. The summer caterpillars feed on holly and the autumn caterpillars feed on ivy, which is often found in hedgerows.
- Orange tip caterpillars live on hedge garlic and many butterflies rely upon nettles as their food source.

### ***Bountiful Butterflies***

***More than twenty species of butterfly breed in hedges, including the appropriately named hedge-brown, also known as the gatekeeper.***



*The speckled wood, a hedgerow visitor from the woodland*

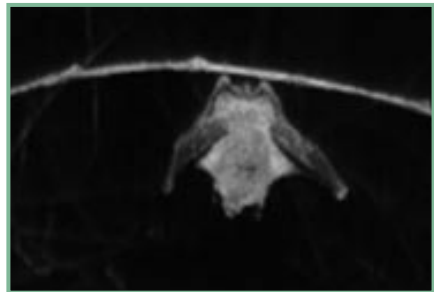
around hedgerows. Many also benefit adjacent farmers arable fields, eating pests, or helping pollinate the crop.

***The oak, a common hedgerow tree supports nearly 300 species of insect.***

### **Plant-abulous and plant-astic**

Hedgerows contain a wide variety of shrubs and plants that would have normally been found in other habitats. There are four main habitats that can be found with hedgerows and a single hedge may contain all of them.

- Mature trees and shrubs - make similar homes to those in woodlands. Holes and hollows in mature trees provide homes for over twenty species of nesting birds including woodpeckers, tits and owls. Seven species of bat also roost in tree hollows during the day.



*Pipistrelle bat resting*

There are hundreds more creepy crawlies that live on, in or



- The hedge bottom - which may consist of plants that normally grow on the woodland floor, under the shade of trees. Bluebells, wood anemones and lesser celandine might be found.
- Grassland - verges or grass strips may contain many plants, like cowslips that would be found in wildflower meadows.
- A ditch - may contain a variety of wetland species, including meadow sweet.

The greater the variety of plants in and around a hedgerow, the better it is likely to be for wildlife. Even plants that are considered weeds by most people can support an amazing variety of life. Stinging nettles support over 40 species of creepy crawlies.

### ***Plant paradise***

***Over a thousand different wildflowers have been found in British hedgerows. For over a quarter of these it is their favourite place!***

## **A THORNY ISSUE**

### **Threats to hedges**

Ever since hedgerows were planted, to enclose land, they have also been removed as farming practices and patterns have altered. Hedges are particularly linked with stock

farming and as the fortunes of stock farming have fluctuated over the last 300 years, so have the fortunes of hedges. The trend since the Second World War has been towards increasing arable farming, with the development of larger more efficient machinery. This has led to the removal of hedges in order to make larger fields.

***In 1947 there were 662,000 km of hedgerow in Britain. By 1993 over half were gone with only 328,000 km remaining. A hedge the length of those destroyed could circle the earth over six times.***

Increased arable farming is not the only cause of hedgerow loss. A lack of management, or poor management of hedgerows, has been identified as the greatest cause of their decline. Hedgerows need more active and careful management than most other wildlife habitats.

Urban developments and road building schemes have also contributed to the decline in hedgerows.

### **The Law and hedgerows**

Since 1st June 1997 it has been illegal to remove most countryside hedges without permission. Permission for removal must be gained from the local Planning Authority, who must decide whether the hedge is 'important' or not. To qualify





*Hedge becoming straggly and overgrown*

as important the hedge must be at least 30 years old and at least 20 long and meet one of eight criteria. These criteria identify the archaeological, historical, wildlife or landscape value of the hedge. The hedge may then be deemed important, and is protected by the Law against removal. If the land manager does remove the hedge, they will be liable to an unlimited fine and be required to replant the hedge.

***If there is any known important historical event or people associated with the hedgerow, it is deemed to be of greater conservation importance.***

Your local knowledge may be vital to protect important hedgerows. If you see a hedgerow being removed and you are concerned contact the local planning authority. They keep a register of Hedgerow Removal Notices which is

available for public inspection.

Some hedges may even be protected under the original Enclosures Act!

## KEEP HEDGES BLOOMING

### *Hedgerow management*

Hedges need to be cared for to thrive. Just as a lawn needs mowing or a garden rose needs pruning, a hedgerow needs regular management. If they are left unmanaged they will grow into a straggly line of trees. Properly managed hedgerows are generally better for wildlife and act as better livestock barriers.

Mechanical flailing is the most common current form of hedgerow management. This is good for keeping a hedge trimmed, but can be destructive at certain times. Hedges should always be trimmed to an A-shape, with a wide base. They should not be flailed every winter, since most plants only flower on two to three year old wood. Trimming should be on a three year rotation in late winter, after all the berries have been eaten.

Hedge laying is the traditional way to manage hedgerows that have become overgrown. It was first described in Roman times, but was probably most common in the 18th and 19th century. Tall stems are partially cut through, bent over, then woven between small stakes. These cut stems are



known as 'pleachers'. Edders or heatherings of flexible hazel or willow, cut from the hedge, are then woven around the tops of the stakes to bind the hedge to make a firm barrier.



*Hedgelaying in progress*

***This method of management is known as the 'Midland Bullock' because it was developed in the Midlands to keep cattle in whilst rejuvenating a hedgerow.***

The stems will then produce lots of offshoots and will thicken over the course of a few years. This produces a thick, low hedge that is excellent for wildlife. With regular trimming the hedge will flourish providing a home for hundreds of species, as well as functioning as a barrier. The hedgerow will not need any major 'hedge housework' for another 10-15 years following laying.

***Hedgerows must not be cut during the bird nesting season between March and August. Trimming is best done during late winter.***

## HEDGEROW MYTHS

Plants have been valued not only for their physical value, but also for their spiritual values. Gods were protectors of various plants and as such, the plants themselves, were held sacred. Many stories, traditions and games are associated with plants of the hedgerow, showing their importance for many hundreds of years.

Hawthorn, the most common hedgerow plant across the Midlands, has many tales surrounding it. The proverb "cleave to the crown though it hangs in a bush" is thought to originate in the hawthorn's association with the House of Tudor. When Richard III was killed at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 his crown rolled into a hawthorn bush. The crown was pulled from the bush by the supporters of Henry Tudor and used to crown the new King.

Elder flowers have been used in remedies and wines for hundreds of years, but it is said that elder wood should not be used for any purpose whatever. Elder wood was considered a useless and dangerous timber. Elder wood cradles caused children to sicken, or die, and even if the smallest quantity of elder is burned in the fire, the devil was believed to come and sit on the chimney.



Holly, a tree that now has close links with Christianity, was valued as a sure preservative against both lightning and witchcraft even before Christianity arrived! One curious use for the twigs of holly was to boil them down to produce a glutinous substance, bird lime, which was smeared on twigs and branches to catch hapless small birds for the pot.

Hazel is also considered a magical wood being used for divining rods and inscribing runes.

***On Michelmas night it is said that the devil urinates or spits on blackberries, which is why you are not supposed to pick them after this date.***

Oak was believed to protect against lightning. Even if an oak is struck anyone standing beneath it was thought to be safe.

## NATURE'S LARDER

### A Hedgerow's year

#### January

The hedgerow begins the year bare of leaves. Winter visitors including birds such as the fieldfare feast on the berries that remain on the bushes.

#### February

The first buds start to appear on trees and shrubs. Catkins grow

on hazel and willows. The brimstone is probably the first and last butterfly seen from February to November.



*Many birds benefit from the shelter provided by hedgerows*

#### March

Spring has arrived, hawthorn leaves appear and butterflies start to emerge. Wood anemone, lesser celandine and primrose come into flower, adding vibrant colour to the hedge bottom. Migrant birds start arriving from southern Europe and Africa. The arrival of swallows is a sure sign that spring is here.



*Primrose in full flower*

#### April

A busy time in the hedgerow's year. Birds are nesting and rearing early broods of young.



Insects are abundant and feed hungry chicks.

### **May**

Hawthorn blossom attracts insects to feed on pollen and nectar.



*A hedgerow in bloom*

### **June**

The birds in 'nature's orchestra' become quieter this month, with insects keeping the sounds of the hedgerow alive. Dog rose blooms with large pink-white flowers. A month when the hedgerow is full of activity.

### **July**

Fledgling birds leave the nest, some birds start a second brood. Bramble flowers attracting more insects to the hedgerow.

### **August**

Peacock, gatekeeper and meadow brown butterflies appear.

### **September**

Hedgerows become 'nature's larder'. Blackberries, sloes, haws, hazelnuts and crab apples ripen. Birds, mammals and insects come to feast on the hedgerow before winter arrives. Ivy flowers

late, which is very important for insects at this time of year.

### **October**

Leaves turn from green to autumn shades. Hedgehogs begin their winter hibernation.

### **November**

Birds flock to feed on hedgerow seeds. Trees and shrubs lose their leaves.

### **December**

Holly and ivy are prominent in the hedgerow, bringing greenery to the winter hedgerow. They also provide shelter for robins and other birds, throughout the winter.



*An ideal wildlife habitat*

## **THE FUTURE OF HEDGES**

Hedgerows are being protected better than ever under current legislation. More people are becoming aware of the importance of hedgerows as a wildlife and heritage feature.

### **Biodiversity action plans**

Biodiversity is the richness of the world's plants and animal life.



The protection of wildlife is being recognised as vital for the future. The national target is to halt the loss of ancient and species rich hedgerows by 2005.

***In 1992, the 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro formed the Convention on Biological Diversity. As part of this, the UK National Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was launched with the aim of protecting endangered species and habitats.***

Local Biodiversity Action Plans have been developed across the country, often by Wildlife Trusts, working in partnership with Local Authorities, Museums Departments, Biological Records Centres and other bodies interested in conservation. Local Biodiversity Action Plans highlight locally important species and habitats that need protection. They translate the national BAP into local action.

***Severn Trent Water plays a key role in protecting the environment in the Midlands. They are one of the regions biggest landowner and have developed their own Biodiversity Action Plans for their sites across the Midlands. Hedgerows are highlighted as a priority habitat due to their importance for nature conservation.***

## HUNT THE HAPPY HEDGE

If you take a closer look at a hedge you may find that it contains a lot more than you think. As well as shrubs and trees, hedgerows contain other climbing and ground plants, mammals and hundreds of insects.

### How old is your hedge?

Historical sources of evidence such as old maps, aerial photographs and other documents can give a good indication of the age of a hedgerow. The more sources of information used, the more accurate a date will be obtained.

### Age by association

The age of a hedge can often be discovered from the age of surrounding features. A hedge may be associated with a feature with a known age, such as a Roman road or a medieval moat. Although this will only provide a rough estimate, it is a good starting point from which to start searching for more definite information from other sources.

### Ageing with shrubs

Surprisingly, it is relatively easy to find out roughly how old a hedge is, through the number of different types of woody plants that are found within it. Hooper's Rule for ageing hedges was developed when Max Hooper discovered a link



between the number of species and the age of a hedge.

Try this exercise on a hedgerow near you to discover its age:

- Select a thirty metre length of mature hedgerow (make sure that you have the permission of the landowner first).
- Count the number of different species of trees and woody shrubs growing in the thirty metre length of hedge.
- Try doing this three times on different sections of the same hedge to get an average count of the number of species found.

The age of the hedgerow can be calculated by multiplying the average number of different species by one hundred. This method is only a rule of thumb, but will act as a rough guide.

***If you count seven different varieties, your hedge is roughly seven hundred years old!***

### **How does this method work?**

Older hedgerows have had more time to become colonised with different varieties of trees and shrubs. Species enrich a hedge over time. Bird-ferried or wind-blown seeds of trees and shrubs take root in the shelter of hedgerows. This means the

number of different species is a good sign of the hedgerow's age. Hooper's rule is not enough to prove the date of a hedge, but with use of maps and/or documentary evidence, it is likely to give a good estimate.

This system does not work with newly planted hedges, which are often planted with many species. The rule should be reasonably accurate for hedges in the Midlands that are more than 100 years old. The accuracy of the rule is not always as great elsewhere in the country.

### **Become a hedgerow guardian**

You can help save hedgerows by supporting local conservation projects. Hedges are easy to survey - everyone knows what a hedge is.

Hedgerow surveys will assist in providing valuable information on the state of field hedges in the Midlands. Surveys will alert conservationists to hedgerows of conservation value. The numbers and locations of hedgerows within an area can be ascertained. They will also allow planning of actions to safeguard hedges as a feature of the county's natural heritage.

A visit to your local Biological Records Centre may be well worth while. Staff may be able to provide you with details of known important hedges. Your survey might uncover important



hedgerows not previously recorded. This would help local conservationists to produce a more detailed representation of numbers of important hedges in your area.



*A fun day out in the countryside*

***Hedgerows are marked on Ordnance Survey maps. These maps are Crown copyright and cannot be reproduced.***

### **Branching out**

Hedgerows are part of our natural and cultural heritage, and have influenced artists and writers. Surveying takes many forms and does not have to concentrate on wildlife.

Photography is always fun and an interesting way to record your special findings. You could photograph the hedge as a whole, or the individual aspects, such as creatures and plants that depend on it. The photographs could form a scrapbook or collage. You could keep a diary on a year in the life of a hedge,

recording the seasonal differences.

Studying old maps and looking at historical locations of hedgerows is a fascinating thing to do. A trip to your local record office and archives will often reveal a wealth of information that will help you locate and date hedgerows in your area. The oldest and most interesting hedges will often follow parish boundaries - these are marked on maps as a line of black dots. They could be recorded and dated as part of a project. A valuable project would be to record all the hedgerows in your local area or parish.

Discovering the old names given to hedges or associated fields often reveals their past uses and origins. An oral history of how the landscape has changed in the lifetime of older residents could also be recorded.

Maps could be created to show where hedgerows are within your local area. These maps could be created in a variety of ways, painting, drawing, even embroidery, can all produce fantastic results. Undertaking these activities highlights the distinctiveness of your village or area.

Finally, remember that surveying is best carried out between April and September. At these times the hedgerow plants have



flowers, leaves and berries that make them easier to identify. It should also be nice weather, so you can get out and about in the countryside.

### Rules when surveying

Surveyors should never leave a Public Right of Way without consent. Some hedges may be adjacent to a Right of Way, so can be recorded from the footpath. If completing a survey, please speak to the local landowner before leaving a path to record a hedge. Local farmers may have a wealth of knowledge about local history and wildlife. The local Parish Council may be able to advise on the landowner, or you might try the local farmhouse.



*Please stick to Rights of Way*

### Hedgerow lifeline

If you want to get your hands dirty whilst helping wildlife, contact your local British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

office about getting involved in hedgerow management including traditional crafts such as hedge-laying. Local Wildlife Trusts, country-parks and countryside management projects also offer the opportunity to learn this ancient craft whilst helping hedgerows.

### Hedgerow helper

Make other people aware by reminding them of the things that are special in the area. This will, hopefully, encourage them to be at the 'cutting hedge of biodiversity' protecting wildlife and the countryside for future generations to enjoy.



# The Great Leicestershire Hedge Hunt

## Your Details:

Name:

Date Of Survey:

Address:

Postcode:

Age: 0-20

20-40

40-60

60+

## Hedge details:

Parish:

OS Grid Reference (if known):

General Location:

Approx. Length: (m)

Approx. Width: (m)

Photograph Yes

No

## Hedgerow Dating

Count the number of different woody species in a thirty metre stretch of the hedge. Repeat this until you have completed five different sections, if the hedge is long enough.

Stretch 1

Stretch 2

Stretch 3

Stretch 4

Stretch 5

Average count

By multiplying the average count by 100, this will give you an approximate age for the hedgerow.

## Tree and shrub species present

Use the identification guide to spot the hedgerow species. If you're an expert hedge hunter you may be able to note down more species than we've listed.

Ash

Hawthorn

Blackthorn

Hazel

Crab Apple

Oak

Dog Rose

Others

Elder

Field Maple

## Wildlife Seen:

Plants:

Animals  
and  
insects:

Birds:

What shape is the hedge?




**Other**  
Please  
specify

### **Surrounding Landuse and Habitats:**

Does the hedgerow have connections to other hedgerows or other features. Features can include wildlife habitats, such as ponds or woodland, or maybe landscape features, such as footpaths, roads or walls.

### **Draw a sketch**

of where your hedge can be found, marking features that do not move like gates and roads. Please mark the land use either side of your hedge.



### **Other comments and known historical evidence**



Thank you for completing this survey. The information from the survey will be entered on to our ecological database, helping us protect the hedgerows of Leicestershire and Rutland. If you wish to survey other hedgerows then simply photocopy the form or contact us at the address below for a more detailed Hedgerow Survey form.

Please return completed survey forms to:

Environment and Heritage Services  
Leicestershire Environmental Resources Centre, Holly Hayes  
216 Birstall Road, Birstall, Leicestershire, LE4 4DG.

For further information: ☎ 0116 267 1377 or fax 0116 267 7112  
Email: [chi@leics.gov.uk](mailto:chi@leics.gov.uk) Website: [www.leics.gov.uk/celebrating\\_wildlife](http://www.leics.gov.uk/celebrating_wildlife)



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## Hedgerow shrub identification guide



**Ash**



**Blackthorn**



**Crab apple**



**Dog rose**



**Elder**



**Field maple**



**Oak**



**Hawthorn**



**Hazel**



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County Council**

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