

HERITAGE &
ENVIRONMENT
NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Native Trees</i>	2
<i>The Importance of Doors</i>	3
<i>Conservation Law</i>	3
<i>Spotlight On...</i>	4
<i>VAT and Historic Buildings</i>	4

Important points of interest in this issue:

- Facts about the Common Ash
- Replacement door advice
- When Conservation Area Consent is needed
- Stocks designated as being of national importance
- Part 4 of the Glossary of Architectural Terms



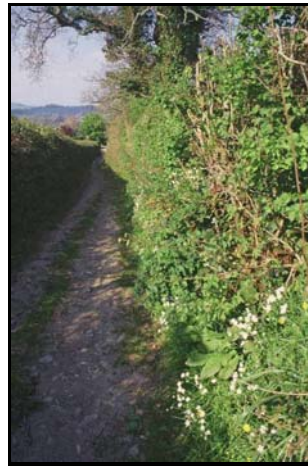
Hedgerows are a significant landscape and wildlife resource. They delineate fields and lane boundaries and can be found in abundance in West Lancashire.

Hedgerows have had a tough time in the past few decades, with around a quarter of a million km of old hedges being destroyed since 1945. Despite important hedgerows being protected, we still lose km of them across the country every year. Huge losses of hedgerows have been recorded, primarily as a result of agricultural change (land development), although neglect has also led to the demise of many. Lots of hedgerows were fragmented by development in the 1930's or before as well as the more recent trend for removing urban hedges to provide off street parking. Hedgerows in West Lancashire are mostly of Hawthorn and relatively poor in variation due to the history of the landscape.

Hedgerows in History

Hedgerows were originally used as field dividers because they were cheaper than fences or walls and were self renewing. Although some date from Roman times, most were established between the Middle Ages and the 1860 enclosure movements. Hedgerows growing along parish boundaries, farm and drove roads may include remnants of the ancient wildwood. Trees and shrubs in ancient hedgerows may be important in maintaining genetic diversity. Without these trees, bramble and nettle patches, animals and plants would

HEDGEROWS



Photograph © Peter Wakely/Natural England

not be able to move around the district so freely. Nationally over 600 plant, 1,500 insect, 65 bird and 20 mammal species are known to live or feed in hedgerows. They also support large numbers of aphid predators and provide a free source of biological control to nearby gardeners.

Protection

In 1997 the Hedgerow Regulations were introduced. They are intended to protect important countryside hedges from destruction or damage. The application of the Regulations is quite complex with many issues taken into account. Generally they look at the importance of the hedge including the number of different species that are present. The hedge must be at least 20m in length. Hedgerows in the countryside, and their conservation, is a quite different subject from the management and regulation of hedges around houses, and, more specifically, between neighbours. For this reason, the Regulations specifically exclude any hedgerow in or around a domestic garden.

Creating or replacing hedgerows

A standard specification for hedge planting would be for the use of 40-60cm or 60-90cm bare-rooted hardy stock plants, planted in double staggered rows between 300 and 450mm apart along each row, with the rows set 300mm apart.

Any hedgerow that includes trees increases not only the wildlife value but also creates an attractive feature. To incorporate trees at the start of planting, consider planting feathered trees (approximately 1.5 metres tall) occasionally along the line. At that size, they will only need a thin stake or cane. The distance between such trees should be between 12 and 25 metres and it is particularly important not to plant hedgerow trees where they will get in the way in the future (E.g. next to access routes, under powerlines, too close to houses).

Most hedgerow mixes comprise of approximately 80% Hawthorn – (*Crataegus monogyna*) with a small proportion of other native shrub plants, Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Dog rose (*Rosa canina*) and others. Typical tree species found in hedgerows in this district are Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Oak (*Quercus robur*).

Maintenance is a big issue for any newly planted hedgerow. In particular, regular watering and the control of weeds will aid the establishment of materials planted. Mulch and animal guards are further considerations to creating a long-term important landscape and wildlife resource.

NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS - THE COMMON ASH



The common ash tree of Britain is the species *Fraxinus excelsior*, Family Oleaceae [Olive family] whose range actually covers most of Europe and is commonly found in the north west of England including West Lancashire. There are many related species of *Fraxinus* found in other parts of the world. The Rowan, or Mountain Ash, is a smaller tree from a different family and is not related to the common ash.

Appearance

The ash tree can grow to a height of 30m, with a spread of 20m. It is deciduous, with leaves which are divided into 9-13 leaflets. These leaves give the tree a feathery outline in summer, and a yellow colour in autumn. The bark on the trunk is a greyish brown, with deep cracks, but the bark on the younger twigs is a smooth, pale, greenish-grey, which gives a strong contrast in winter to the matt black buds. The buds are often the last to open in the British spring.

Sexual Confusion

Clusters of small green flowers appear in spring, before the leaves. Most flowering plants have flowers that contain both male and female parts, while some produce separate male and female flowers on different plants. The common ash is seriously confused in this respect: while some ash trees have flowers with both male and female parts, some have only male or only female flowers, and some produce separate male and female flowers on different branches. Some branches which produce only female flowers one year may produce all male flowers the following year. The end result of this mixed-up sex is normal enough - flowers with female parts produce bunches of dry seeds known as *keys*.

Germination and Growth

The *keys* stay on the trees through the winter, and only fall in spring. They can be carried long distances by the wind and germinate quickly in almost any type of soil. In European conditions the ash is normally a fast-growing tree, and will start flowering when around 30 years old, when it will probably have reached a height of 15 to 20m. Growth in height will usually stop when the tree is around 100 years old. Very few ash trees live beyond the age of 250.

The Habitat of the Ash Tree

Ash trees grow best on fairly damp soils, as long as the conditions are not too acidic. Since they need plenty of light, they can easily be crowded out by overshadowing trees. The limestone areas where they flourish also suit beech trees, so that long-lasting ash woodland is usually found only in areas outside the range of the beech. In Britain, ash woodland can be found on the steep limestone slopes of

the Peak District, in Somerset, in South Wales, and in southwestern Scotland. In Ireland, where the beech tree is not a native, the old forests in limestone areas were once a mixed woodland of ash and elm. Most of these forests were cleared long ago, but the ash is still the most common large tree in Irish lowland hedges.

Ash trees do not support a wide range of invertebrates so ash woodlands do not have as rich a collection of birds as most other broad-leaved forests.

Ornamental Varieties of the Common Ash

If given the room to grow and spread, the common ash forms a very striking specimen tree, though the lack of undergrowth makes it unpopular among many gardeners. There are also a number of cultivated varieties, which may be found in large gardens and country parkland. These include *Fraxinus excelsior* 'Jaspidea' which has yellow leaves in spring, and a golden colour in autumn, and the smaller weeping ash, *Fraxinus excelsior* 'Pendula'.

The Uses of Ash Wood

Ash wood has two main practical uses. It is excellent firewood, and burns well even before being dried. In many areas, ash trees were traditionally coppiced for firewood. This meant that the branches were regularly chopped back so that the plant took the form of a bush rather than a tall tree.

The other main use of ash wood is when both strength and a little flexibility are needed. In sports, ash is commonly used for hockey sticks, oars, snooker cues and for the hurleys used in the Irish sport of hurling. 'The clash of the ash' is a familiar phrase to Irish sports journalists trying to convey the excitement of a hurling match. Ash wood is also popular for tool handles. Its shock-absorbing quality makes it useful for the chassis frames of the classic Morgan motor cars. It was also widely used for making longbows.

Mythology and Folklore

The ash was quite an important tree in many older European traditions. Its English name is said to come from the Anglo-Saxon word *aesc*, meaning spear. In Norse mythology, the World Tree Yggdrasil was an ash tree. In the Celtic Ogham Alphabet ash or 'Nion' represented our modern letter N. In English folk wisdom, it was thought that the opening of the buds could predict the weather: if oak buds were seen to open first, the summer would be dry, while if the ash buds opened first, the weather would be wet. This can be remembered by the little rhyme:

*Oak before ash, in for a splash
Ash before oak, in for a soak.*



Stories and legends abound for this tree: the seeds of the ash have long been used in love divination.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DOORS – PART 1

Doors, like windows, are extremely important features of historic buildings. Their function, size and location mean they are often key focal points. It is therefore vital that, where possible, original doors are repaired rather than replaced and that if a replacement is necessary, that appropriate doors of high quality design are chosen.

Traditional doors were often simple constructions of vertical boarding or timber paneling, usually without any form of glazing. Fanlights were commonly introduced above the door to let light into the hallway. During the 18th and 19th centuries door surrounds became more flamboyant with classical and gothic styles becoming popular.

Keep it simple

When considering a replacement door, attention should be paid to traditional styles in the nearby area. Generally, a simple door is the best solution and faux period features such as inbuilt fanlights, leaded or bull eye glazing should be avoided. Many new doors are parodies of historic designs, some examples are shown here and many of them are

inappropriate. Of course, some historic properties can support or need a more elaborate design - the trick is to keep features in character with the rest of the property. Generally over ornate or elaborate doors rarely work well and are best avoided.

A painted finish is by and large better than a stained one and obviously Upvc is an unacceptable material for doors in historic buildings or areas.

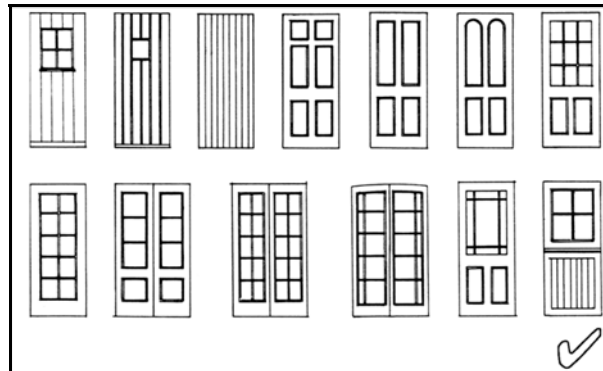
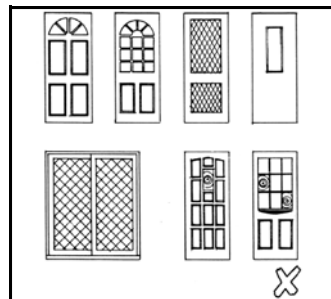
Modern extensions or curtilage properties in contemporary style can provide opportunities for exciting door design using non-traditional materials.

Justify the design chosen

It is worthwhile remembering that a replacement door often requires Listed Building

Consent and/or planning permission. When submitting an application the design statement should justify why a particular type of feature has been chosen. It is therefore best to check with us first and it helps to have a picture or example of what type of replacement you are considering.

The second part of this article will be printed in the next edition and will discuss garage and patio doors.



17th century door

Conservation Law – Part 11

The Need to obtain Conservation Area Consent.

Over the last few months we have started getting applications being submitted for Conservation Area Consent (CAC) for works to properties in conservation areas, not all of which have needed permission.

CAC is only ever needed for the demolition of a building within a conservation area with a cubic content greater than 115 cu m (generally larger than a double garage sized building) or for walls higher

than 1 m where they front onto a highway or 2m elsewhere.

Specifically, for clarification, CAC is **not** needed for:

- The demolition or removal of buildings smaller than 115 cu m.
- The demolition of part of a building (for example an extension or an outbuilding attached to the main house) unless the work was so extensive as just to leave the façade. Such work would, in planning

terms, be regarded as an alteration and not demolition.

- For the demolition of any wall less than 1 m high, where it abuts a highway, or less than 2 m in height elsewhere.
- Any agricultural building built since 1914.

Should you want any advice or help in deciding whether work involving the demolition of a building requires CAC please contact **Ian Bond, Heritage and Environment Manager** on **01695 585167**.



CAC is needed for the demolition of a building within a conservation area with a cubic content greater than 115 cu m

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MORE INFORMATION

DON'T FORGET all the back copies of this newsletter can be downloaded from our website, which also has a whole host of other useful information, leaflets and guidance.

ENGLISH HERITAGE launched a new book in May celebrating the history of Liverpool's sporting heritage. "Played in Liverpool" is available from English Heritage's publications department or through their on-line bookshop.

£56,000 FINE: A company has been fined £56,000 for felling 28 protected trees on land due to be transformed into a housing estate in Bolton. The removal of the trees, including alder, hawthorn and pine, breached Tree Preservation Orders made by Bolton District Council.

BICKERSTAFFE STOCKS have recently been designated as a Listed Structure. Located near the Stanley Gate pub, the stocks were first documented in 1750 but are thought to be earlier. The timber, unsurprisingly, has been replaced and recent ground works by the Parish Council has improved their context and setting.

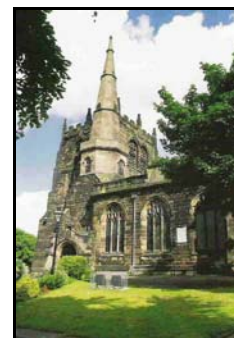


SPOTLIGHT ON...ORMSKIRK PARISH CHURCH

The Church's origins are in the 12th century and part of the north wall of the chancel dates from this period.

It has a complicated history of re-building and enlarging. A small carved stone panel depicting two men on the exterior east wall is probably Anglo-Saxon. It is one of only three churches in the country to have both a steeple (late 14th century) and a separate tower (mid 16th century).

As with most important parish churches there are a number of significant burials. Of interest is the burial of James, seventh Earl of Stanley, who was beheaded at Bolton during the Civil War. Reportedly his body lies in one coffin and his head in another, the ends of which fit together and indicate the angle at which the neck was severed.



VAT: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR HISTORIC BUILDINGS

We have recently had several queries regarding the status of VAT and historic buildings so we felt it would be worth re-running the following article from May 2004.

VAT is charged on building work of most descriptions at the standard rate of 17.5%. However zero rating can apply to work to a 'protected building' (which includes listed buildings) if it is an 'approved alteration'.

Zero rating only relates to buildings solely designed or have become a dwelling and which are used for residential or charitable purposes.

Approved alterations are those which cannot be carried out without the need for Listed Building Consent from the Local Planning Authority. Consent must be received prior to starting work.

The zero rate generally applies to the goods and materials used for the altera-

tion and can include the services supplied by builders, plumbers etc. It does not apply to electrical or gas appliances, fitted furniture or the professional fees of architects, surveyors etc. Zero rate will also not apply to work undertaken by the owner as DIY.

In practice zero rating is not automatically granted and the owner must provide evidence to Customs & Excise that the works are not liable to VAT at the standard rate. HM Customs & Excise suggest that in addition to normal records a contractor will need to provide a copy of the relevant listing description and copies of the Listed Building Consent and accompanying plans. More information can be found on their website: www.hmrc.gov.uk

Please note you should always seek independent advice on VAT matters from a suitably qualified person.