

Community Archaeology Study Days 2007/8



Making Sense of Hedgerows

By Barry Wright

Dunnington Reading Room and Hagg Wood, Dunnington

Saturday, 20th May 2007

Feedback from the study day:

'Very enjoyable.'

'Extremely interesting day- more content than I expected.'

'Good presentational mix- relaxed and interested participants.'



Hedgerows provide valuable information about the historic environment. These lines of closely spaced trees and shrubs mark the boundaries of estates, farms, and other enclosures. Archaeological deposits often exist under and around hedgerows. The study of hedgerows allows us to look at not only the historic environment, but the natural environment as well. We can see what types of plants and trees grow in a particular area. Examining hedgerows provides us with information about how people in the past manipulated the physical environment for their own use. In fact, hedgerows are so important that they are protected by laws that govern their proper evaluation and recording before removal.

This Study Day was aimed at outlining why and how we study hedgerows as a special part of our historic landscape. Barry Wright gave a presentation about hedgerows to a large crowd of thirty-three people. In the morning, he provided an introduction to studying

hedgerows in the historic environment. In the afternoon, we drove to Hagg Wood to take a look at some of the hedgerows there. Barry gave us advice on how to record a hedgerow ourselves. Some of the species we observed there included elder, hawthorn, hazel, yew, honeysuckle, holly, willow, oak, birch and ash. This was a great introduction not only to the varieties of plant and tree species evident in a small area, but on how hedgerows help to shape the historic environment. Overall, it was a fun and enlightening day.



First picture: <http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/farming/whyfarming/england.asp>

