

# OCTOBER 2023 newsletter



## BRIDPORT TREE PLANTING Let's help double tree cover

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It's four years since we started and this is our 24th Newsletter. Welcome - you are one of 250 regular readers and we need to keep in touch with you in view of the worsening Climate Crisis and what we and you can do about it.

This issue contains news about what free trees we offer this winter to householders in and around Bridport. We've just spent a thousand pounds on saplings. **New** - some half-standard fruit trees, coming in December and free if you apply and are a lucky winner. **New** - news about the planting of a community orchard in town. **New** - news about the great Big Dorset Hedge Project.

First - a reminder of where we began with Friends of the Earth Campaign to double tree cover in the UK. Here below is a link to four short videos Dan Snow made which gives the basic idea of what we are about. We've covered this before but it



can do no harm to remind people, especially when there is still so much need to educate people about trees and what they do for us. We mention the Sycamore Gap. Some of us are still in shock and disbelief about this terrible vandalism and the only good thing to come from this might be a renewed interest in trees.

<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/nature/dan-snow-investigates>

*Here is a poem by Robert Frost which was first published exactly a hundred years ago. For those of you who know it, a reminder, perhaps, of the coming winter. For those to whom it is new, a good example of saying something very simple but effective about nature and the world we live in. And the importance of trees.*

## Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

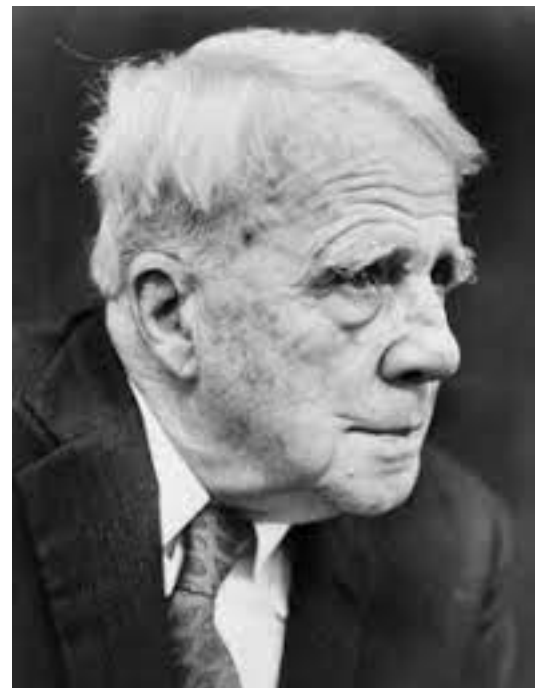
Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Frost 1874-1963



And now for local matters. Here is our plan for a new community orchard (24 mixed fruit trees) at Court Orchard. Presently a fairly bare space, this is being transformed with new play equipment and a planned new football area soon. The orchard, supported by sounding out local people, is in the north east corner of a large site. We are providing trees free of charge.



Planting should take place at the end of December/beginning of January 2024. Watch this space and get involved!

We also have another, smaller, site opposite the Co-op. We are hoping to plant more trees at the golf club as cover for the driving range. There is a new planting including some fruit trees in Bradpole, and also maybe a hundred saplings alongside the river Asker, with new permission from the Environment Agency.

## OUR GIVEAWAYS

Do you fancy a half-standard fruit tree free of charge for your garden? We are purchasing a batch from Adam's Apples in East Devon. There will be 15 apples, pears, cherries, plum, damson worth about £300 for lucky winners of a draw we'll have in the New Year. Look out for our December newsletter for details. We're also giving away 15 fruit trees to the Allotments Society. As before, each Bridport household is entitled to three free native species (non-fruit) saplings such as hawthorn, hazel, birch, beech, rowan etc. Please enquire by email.



### **Bee Friendly Bridport**

Since launching at the Charter Fair we have been busy talking to groups and

individuals to promote interest in creating and maintaining good pollinator habitats in the area.

We have had a positive response from BTC and met with council officials to understand current policies and to see areas we could encourage change. We have recently asked the council to sign up to the national pesticide action network to eliminate all pesticide use on town property.

Over the winter we will be designing and creating a bee and bug house trail. We would like 8 locations to site insect homes around the town to encourage pollinators and then will create an information map for residents and visitors to follow. We would like to thank Groves Nurseries who have been generous and given us a small grant. For more information or to sponsor one of our bug houses please email

[info@beefriendlybridport.org](mailto:info@beefriendlybridport.org).

# A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE



Just the other side of Eggardon Hill, coming from Bridport past the Spyway Inn, lies the wonderful landscape of wooded hills and patchwork meadows known as Powerstock Common - and three of us hedge survey students were here to map a farm, field by field.

Led by John Calder of the Great Big Dorset Hedge Project, and each of us equipped with an illustrated Surveyors Crib Sheet, we scrambled down steep slopes, trudged through woods, found the remains of hedges not touched for perhaps thirty years.

But this was also a chance to be in nature. [Our first find was some interesting fungi hanging onto a dead branch. None of us were fungi fanatics and we weren't able to identify it.](#)

We measured gaps between oaks, ash, hawthorn and field maples standing in hedges. We judged what we saw under four categories - *tightly managed*, *re-juvenated*, *prime of life and running up* - except that on this farm nothing we saw was tightly managed or rejuvenated.

[Second biodiversity find. A hazel nibbled in characteristic way, leaving a perfect round hole, by a dormouse. But there were also hundreds of mature hazelnuts lying on the ground. Obviously a lack of local squirrels!](#)

We looked at banked hedgerows, noting the depth of the accompanying ditch. We estimated the height of the hedges, and the widths. All according to something called the Adams Hedgerow Condition Codes 1 to 10.

[Third biodiversity find. The skeleton of a deer and, later, two more. A local herd of large fallow deer are known to damage trees and some local landowners have employed marksmen, and sell the meat.](#)

We slid down deep banks, found outcrops of limestone similar to those on neighbouring Eggardon Hill, identified other tree species - rowan, blackthorn, an ancient apple and one tree we could not name.

[Fourth nature find. A large group of wasps \(or were they bees?\) each burrowing into a bank of soil to get to their individual nests.](#)

[Fifth find: The largest hairy caterpillar - of a Fox Moth -](#)



[you could hope to see. We staggered back up the hill to the roadway after two hours of eye-opening survey work which should benefit the local farmer in applying for grants.](#)

If you would like to join the 150 Dorset residents who are signed up to do hedge survey work and also to visit a bit of countryside you might otherwise miss, do get in touch with the organiser, John Calder, at [jccalder@gmail.com](mailto:jccalder@gmail.com)

and go to this website for full information

<https://www.dorsetcan.org/hedge/>

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