

## 10.0 THE COTSWOLD EDGE

10.1 Although the *Cotswold Edge* can be sub-divided into three character areas, the landscape is to a considerable extent united by its 'Cotswold' features of:

- broad, rolling landforms and ridges;
- oolite buildings and occasional oolite drystone walls;
- nucleated villages and scattered farms.

The three character areas (Figure 9) are:

- *Foxcote Slopes* (C1)
- *Buckland/Norton St Philip/Orchardleigh Park Ridges* (C2)
- *Wheel Brook/Buckland Brook Valleys* (C3)

The area also contains three fine parks, Amerdown, Orchardleigh and Fairleigh which form sub-units within the Ridges.

### 10.2 Foxcote Slopes

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| • Broad, sweeping slopes      | • Occasional scrub and woodland on steep slopes |
| • Large fields                | • Shelterbelts                                  |
| • Low hedges                  | • Occasional drystone walls                     |
| • Intermittent hedgerow trees | • Dolomite and Lias Limestone buildings         |

10.2.1 These broad, sweeping slopes form the south eastern side of the Wellow Brook valley. The district boundary turns south eastwards near Single Hill and follows a minor tributary of the Wellow. The slopes landscape continues along this valley as far as Lippiat Hill, but the wide views north westwards which characterise the landscape as a whole are lost.

10.2.2 The slopes have gentle gradients, large fields with variable hedgerows and intermittent trees. There is a predominance of arable cultivation. Shelterbelts and occasional drystone walls enhance the similarity with the Cotswold landscape, as do the patches of scrub on the steepest parts of the slopes and the larger plantation woodlands. New Plantation/Littleton Wood/Home Covert is a conspicuous landmark. However, the few older buildings within the area are mainly conglomerate or Lias Limestone rather than oolite.

### 10.3 Orchardleigh/Buckland/Norton St Philip Ridges

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|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Broad rounded ridges        | • Wide views             |
| • Large fields                | • Predominance of arable |
| • Low hedges                  | • Parklands and villages |
| • Intermittent hedgerow trees | • Oolite buildings       |
| • Occasional drystone walls   |                          |

10.3.1 North of Frome the land rises steeply to The Down from which an undulating landform extends across Orchardleigh Park, falling erratically towards the Wheel Brook Valley. To the west it is cut by the

Buckland Brook Valley but from Buckland Dinham the land rises to a narrower ridge which sweeps north westwards to Terry Hill and then north westwards via Faulkland to Norton St Philip.

10.3.2 The crest of the ridges and more gentle side slopes are occupied by large fields bounded by low hedges and occasionally drystone walls and are predominantly arable (Photograph 15). There are wide views from the high points on the ridges such as that eastwards from Mells Down towards the Vale of the White Horse. Villages are found in sheltered sites below the crests of ridges, while the principal buildings outside the villages are large farmsteads close to the A366 on the crest. As the land slopes down to the Valleys, the field sizes become smaller and pasture is present.

10.3.3 In the west, Orchardleigh, its adjacent woodland and the village of Lullington form a parkland and estate landscape which is in strong contrast to the open arable that surrounds it. Orchardleigh Park contains many fine individual features, such as the setting of the church by the lake, while the estate village of Lullington inevitably has a strong unity of character.

10.3.4 At the western edge of the area, Ammerdown Park is also a distinctive landscape enclosed within a substantial ring of woodland, but with The Column forming a landmark from a very wide area.

10.3.5 Buckland Dinham is prominently sited where the land rises out of the Buckland Brook valley, with its church tower being a focal point.

Faulkland straggles along the A366, although it has an attractive green and some oolite buildings at the centre. However, the ancient settlement of this area is the small village of Hemington which is attractively set at the foot of Tynning Hill along one of the minor lanes which wind down from the ridge. Norton St Philip is the largest settlement, with its old centre and church lying at the head of Norton Brook, which flows northwards out of the area. Tree cover increases on the approaches to this village, for instance, as an avenue of horse chestnut along the western approaches, strengthening the contrast with its surrounding agricultural landscape. The village contains some fine oolite buildings, of which the George Inn is the most prominent and best known.

#### 10.4 Wheel Brook/Buckland Brook Valleys

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Wide, shallow valleys               | • Mixed arable and pasture |
| • Large to medium sized hedged fields | • Sparse settlement        |
|                                       | • Frequent hedgerow trees  |

10.4.1 The Valleys are a landscape of gentle broad-scale landforms with large to medium size fields which generally have more substantial hedgerows and more frequent hedgerow trees than the surrounding Ridges (Photograph 6). Views of the band of woodland extending from Hardington Wood to Orchardleigh are prominent feature and the broad knoll on which Hardington plantation lies is conspicuous. Here, too, parkland trees that have survived from the former Hardington Park can be seen. The hamlets of Hardington and Laverton are dominated by

substantial buildings in typical Cotswold oolite. This is also the building material of the farmsteads, notably those along the network of winding lanes west of Laverton.