VEGETATION SURVEY OF WESTLETON COMMON



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Introduction

Overall Westleton Common today consists of two sites, one large and the other vast in size both with interesting landforms and with same mix of vegetation species, typical of a heathland. The Northern area was the old football pitch and amenity open space that has been left to be overgrown by heather and gorse to become heathland. The South was previously an area of industry, quarrying out gravel, and since it ceased has been left to become a heathland also.

One's first impressions of entering the Northern Common by the main entrance on Baker's Lane is of a large expansive area of low growing heather with scrub and woodland around the edges. Exploring the location and using a map can be confusing, as even learned locals will be challenged in pointing out your exact locations. The area slowly rises to the North where the Common House property meets the Common. Behind the Northeastern scrub is a small collection of trees, that disguises a derelict building by the boundary, proving that there are plenty of hidden places protected by the gorse. Another area is the oak copse behind Briar Cottage and Four Winds, where there is a shallow dip and a hidden mossy open space also protected by thick gorse to one side.

In the Southern Common, relating the Car Park on the map to where one believes it is should be can be challenging, even after visiting it several times. However the rest of the site seems pretty straight forward. The main path through the thicket of gorse and scrub comes out onto an open green space where a large concrete foundation still sits. This is one of the lower central parts of the Common, where water logging is common. Continuing South the incline rises and finishes with a good view of the surrounding countryside, where a bench marks the location. Moving East, one passes another low area, also prone to water logging. One follows the path through a birch copse and then comes to a cross roads, with Ralph's Mill Cottage ahead. This Southern area is enclosed by a sloping boundary wrapping itself around it. By the Southern disused pit there is still exposed sand and gravel, with lichen and patches of heather carpeting the ground away from it. The second disused pit (North of Ralph's Mill Cottage) also exposes much sand, however has no lichen and little heather. Here grass and moss keep the ground held together. Moving Northward back to the concrete area, on both sides gorse is dominant and covers the area in clusters. Here the slopes go up to Mill Road. The lowest area of the site is the Peckford road entrance, where there is a vehicle access lane to the concrete area. On both sides the areas are of scrub and semi mature woodland. On the Northern side, it undulates up towards an embankment and a woodland backing onto The Cleeves, Myrtle Cottages and others. By Peckford Road entrance there is a mound along side the road – the latest dumping ground, now littered with perennial weeds. There is a path here; heading Southwards and later joins the higher area with the bench that looks over the surrounding countryside.

Method

The survey was mapped out and judged by eye as both areas are too large to be measured using a map at a 1:2500 scale. Distinguishing between vegetative species was done generally, marking the dominate species of that area. Recordings where taken by three site visits: November 24th 2010, December 10th 2010 and January 11th 2011, by use of drawing on maps, marking the site into different zones, taking photographs and estimating the vegetation cover of each zone. The percentage of bare ground was not included into the percentages but shown visually on the vegetation survey map.



Understanding Westleton Common

Ordance Survey.2011. Westleton. [online]. Accessed January 20th 2011.CROWN. Available from: http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/getamap/

Understanding Westleton Common...continued



Bing/MultiMap.2011.Westleton.[online].Accessed on January 20th 2011. Available from: http://www.bing.com/maps/?

FORM=MMREDIR#JnE9Lndlc3RsZXRvbisIN2Vzc3QuMCU3ZXBnLjEmYmI9NTUuMDA5MzU1Mjc0NDAyJT dIMTAuMjIzMzM5ODQzNzUIN2U0Ny44MDYwNDQyMjI2NDYxJTdILTEwLjEyMzMzOTg0Mzc1







Westleton Common North

Date of Survey 1: 10th December 2010 Weather: +4°C overcast with snow patches

Zone 1: This location is in the very Western corner of the North common. It is a mess of left over garden species and scrub. There are mature Quercus robur (Qr) and Ulmus glabra (Ug) and evidence of on old blackthorn hedge with Prunus spinosa (Ps) in the corner as well as a semi mature llex aquliflorium (Ia), a coppiced Fraxinus excelsior (Fe), a Malus spp and a semi mature Sambucus nigra (Sm) Other species include Rubus fruticosus (Rf) and Pteridium aquilinum (Pa) and Hedera helix (Hh) with a mix of: docks, nettles, thistles, chickweed, moss, goose grass, and common grass and primroses

Zone 2: This zone is dominant of a Qr copse as a slightly sunken area with semi mature Qr. Around this the area consists of Ulex europaeus (Ue) scrub with a little Ps and Rf and a young Ug. There are also clumps and patches of mature and young Calluna vulgaris (Cv), Ue, Bp and Ia. The edge of the zone that touches zone 5 there is more mature and flowering Ue as well as old and declining Ue. In the centre of the zone 2 and not under the Qr canopy are mosses, Lichen. Hh and Sn were found only by the track that leads to the houses along the Western boundary.

Zone 3: Here are semi mature and mature Bp, Qr and Ug within their own clearing by the boundary. Around this are Rf and a mature Ue scrub and a few. Young Cv found in the Northern part.

Zone 4: Scattered and in clusters near zone 3 are *Ps*, beyond this along the Northern boundary there is *Bp*, *Qr* and a *Sorbus aucuparia* (*Sa*), all semi-mature trees. Along the field edging is *Pa* and *Rf* with other perennial weed herbs.

Zone 5: Previously a football pitch now is covered by young Cv and patchy young Ue.

Zone 6: This zone is mostly covered by mature Bp and Ue with a spattering of Rf and Cytisus scoparius (Cs/Broom) towards the houses, with young Bp and clumps of Cv keeping near the path. There is an interesting concrete ground structure overgrown by Rf and Ue close to the main entrance. On the ground is mostly moss and grass spp. In the Eastern boundary corner is found a small wood of semi mature Qr with Pa as ground cover.

Zone 7: Located by the main entrance to the common is a mix of mature and semi mature Ue scrub with young Cv and Rf. There is also a semi mature Qr and the rest is grass cover and moss.

Carpark: This area is mostly BG (Bare Ground), however there is Acer pseudoplatanus (Ap), Cratgegus monogyna (Cm), Ps and mature Ue. Mosses and grasses act as ground cover under canopy.

Zone 8: Right next to the car park, this zone mostly consists of mature and semi mature *Bp*, *Qr* and mature *Ue*.

Westleton Common North

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	Mature	Μ
					Semi Mature	S٨
	Trees			35	Young	Y
	Fraxinus excelsior	Ash	Coppiced		Declining	D
	llex aquliflorium	Holly	Μ			
	Malus domestica	Apple	M			
	Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	M SM			
	Quercus robur	Oak	M SM			
	Sambucus nigra	Elder	Μ			
	Ulmus glabra	Elm	SM			
	Shrubs			40		
1	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble	Covering			
	Climbers			5		
	Hedera helix	lvy	Covering & Climbing			
1	Other			20		
	Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken	Covering			
		Thistle	Scattered			
		Primrose	Scattered			
		Dock	Scattered			
		Chickweed	Scattered			
				100	Total	

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%
	Trees			60
	Betual pendula	Silver birch	SM	
	llex aquliflorium	Holly	Μ	
	Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	Μ	
	Quercus robur	Oak	SM	
	Sambucus nigra	Elder	M	
	Ulmus glabra	Elm	Υ	10
	Shrubs			10
2	Calluna vulagris	Heather	M patchy	
2	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	M SM	
	Climbers			10
	Hedera helix	lvy	Covering & Climbing	5
	Other			
	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble		5
		Lichen		
		Moss		
		Plantain		
				100

Total

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Trees			40	
	Betual pendula	Silver birch	M		
	Quercus robur	Oak	SM		
	Sambucus nigra	Elder	Μ		
	Ulmus glabra	Elm	SM MD		
3	Shrubs			40	
	Calluna vulagris	Heather	Υ		
	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	M		
	Other			20	
	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble			
				100	Tot

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Trees			50	
	Betual pendula	Silver birch	M		
	Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	M Clusters & Scattered		
	Quercus robur	Oak	SM		
4	Other			50	
4	Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken			
	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble			
		Grass			
		Moss			
				100	Toto

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Shrubs				
F	Calluna vulagris	Heather	Y	70]
5	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	Y Patchy	30]
				100	Total

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%
	Trees			30
	Betual pendula	Silver birch	M & Y	
	Shrubs			60
	Calluna vulagris	Heather	Y Clumps	
	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	M	
6	Other			10
	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble	Sparse	
		Broom		
		Grass		
		Moss		
				100

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Trees			10	
	Quercus robur	Oak	SM		
	Shrubs			70	
	Calluna vulagris	Heather	Y Clumps		
7	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	м		
1	Other			20	
	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble	Sparse		
		Grass			
		Moss			
				100	То

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Trees			60	
	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	SM		
	Crategus monogyna	Hawthorn	Μ		
	Prunus spinosa	Balckthorn	M		
Car Park	Shrubs			30	
Car Park	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	M		
	Other			10	
		Grass			
		Moss			
				100	Toto

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Trees			40	
	Betual pendula	Silver birch	Μ		
8	Quercus robur	Oak	SM		
0	Shrubs			60	
	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	M		
				100	Tot



Photographs taken from position a and opposite High Oaks house. On the left shows Field End house and on the right shows the parking spaces for Briar Cottage and Four Winds.



e shows the transition from zone 2 to 3. The far left photograph depicts one of the newly cut paths through the heather. In the third photograph along, the house in behind the silver birch tree is The Oaks house.



f continues on from **e** and looks out over zone 5 and where zone 4 begins (middle photograph). Between the silver birch and oak tree in the left photograph is a path going to the garden gate of Common House.



Left photograph first shows zone 5, the old football pitch. The path shown is the one that leads from the main entrance to the Common and curves towards Old Flint Cottage and back onto Baker's Lane again. The right photograph shows zone 2.



h shows a panorama starting on the left with Four Winds, then Old Flint Cottage, The Oaks and then behind the oak is Common House. One house in every photograph and depicting zone 5 in the foreground.



Photograph **i** depicts the old pond in zone 4.



In **j** it shows the sparse ground cover before approaching the corner of the Common where bracken takes over and a semi mature woodland joins zone 4 and 6 together.



 ${\bf k}\,$ on the other side of ${\bf j}$ shows the triangle between the southern half of zone 6 divided by the path, and the developing heather and birch scrub on the other side.

Car Park: Photographs taken from Baker's Lane





Westleton Common South

Date of Survey 2: 11th January 2011 Weather: +6°C overcast

Zone 1: This zone is located along the Northern boundary of the site and Westwards, following the line of the houses and Road (B1125). Along embankment 1 and backing onto the houses to the North is a copse of mature and semi mature *Betula pendula* (*Bp*) and *Quercus robur* (*Qr*) as well as mature and semi mature *Ulex europaeus* (*Ue*) in sparse clumps. There is dense clumps of *Rubus fruticosus* (*Rf*) within the *Ue* and *Pteridium aquilinum* (*Pa*) found under the tree canopy here. Towards the Western area is *Ilex aquiflorium* (*Ia*) at mature, semi mature and at a very young age. Along the southern ride of Embankment 1 is a clearing and open space with patches of *Pa* with recovering young *Calluna vulgaris* (*Cv*). There are also patches of mature *Cv* and very young *Ue* with young *Sorbus aucuparia* (*Sa*) and *Qr*. In the circle are *Digitallis spp*, *Rf*, young *Ue* and *Cv* as well as *Sambucus nigra* (*Sn*). There is also a scruby copse consisting of mature/decling *Ue* and mature and semi mature *Bp* with *Qr* with a mix of *Rf* and *Pa* and some semi mature *Sa* and very young *Ia*. Either side of path up to Embankment 1 from the Car Park is mature *Ue*, *Sn*, *Qr* and *Rf*.

Car Park: Scrub consisting of Pa, Rf, mature/declining Ue, semi mature Qr and Crategus monogyna (Cm) with Rosa spp.

Zone 2: This is Embankment 2, along which only in the ridge has mature Ue. On the slopes is a mix of grasses, mosses and BG (bare ground). However there is mostly Pa as the dominant ground cover mixed with *Digitalis spp* and Lichen. *Rf* is present in sparse patches along the slopes.

Zone 3: This location covers the surroundings of the concrete area in the middle of the site. There is much bare ground, grasses and mosses as the general ground cover. There is also patches of *Ue* and *Rf*. To the North there is mature *Salix capera* (*Sc*) mixed with *Rf* and *Cytisus scoparius* (Cs/Broom). This zone is prone to some water logging, and there is a small old drainage channel going Northwestwards from the concrete area.

Zone 4: This zone covers the foot of Embankment 1 to the vehicle access road and to the Western boundary. It is a zone covered in mature scrub by the main path and turns to a young woodland area. It is a tangle of mature and semi mature *Bp*, *Sn* and *Qr* with *Loniceria* spp. As ground cover it is mostly *Pa* and *Rf*. Closer towards the road (B1125) there is a mature *Cm*, only two *Ue* and some bushes of *Rosa spp* and *Levisticum* officinale (Lovage). The corner however is covered by a scrub of *Rf* and *Hedera helix* covering the road side trees.

Zone 5: This is a large zone to the western boundary of the site, consisting of Embankment 3 and a more recent man made embankment along the road side. Embankment 3 is covered by a mature scrub of mature Qr and Ue. There are also Rosa spp bushes and Pa everywhere mixed with Rf. Mature Bp can be found at the foot of the embankment with semi mature Qr and Sn. On the modern bank is a mix of native perennial herbs/weeds. Along the path, through the middle of the two banks is a covering of grasses, mosses and other low growing perennials.

Zone 6: This zone is located in the Southern part of the site and on higher ground than its surroundings. It consists of much BG exposing sand, with young Cv and Ue.

Zone 7: This zone wraps its self around the Southern boundaries of the site, from zones 5 and 6 to zone 10 and Ralph's Mill Cottage. It is made up of mostly mature Ue along the ridges and slopes, with mature and semi-mature Bp and Qr at the foot of the steep slopes.

Zone 8: This is the lower area of the middle of the site, prone to water logging. Around it is a scrub of *Bp* and *Sc* with some mature/declining *U*e and patches of *Cv*. On the ground is much moss with grasses and lichen. There is also a small copse leading Eastwards of mostly mature *Bp* and a few young *Qr*.

Zone 9: This is the disused pit located Southeast from Ralph's Mill Cottage. There is patches of BG exposing large differently coloured gravel stones and there are clusters of young Cv. However most ground cover is by Lichen.

Zone 10: This zone meets zone 7, and 9 and is seen as the cross roads where several paths around the site meet. This zone also includes the sloping banks to of Ralph's Mill Cottage. Here there is a mix of BG exposing large dark gravel stones, many different mosses and the same Lichen as in zone 9. Ther is also semi mature Ue and patches of young Cv and Rf.

Zone 11: This location is West of Ralph's Mill Cottage and has been the place where quicksand swollowed a whole truck many years ago. Today the zone is covered by mature *Bp* and *Sc*. There is also some *U*e, however this is only found to the Northern edge of the zone.

Zone 12: This zone is the disused pit located North of Ralph's Mill Cottage. It consists of much exposed BG as sand and other small low growing perennials including mosses and some Lichen. There are patches of young Ue and Cv, however mature Ue is only found on the slopes and along the ridges of the pit.

Westleton Common South

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	Mature	Μ
					Semi Mature	SM
	Trees			50	Young	Y
	Betula pendula	Silver birch	M SM		Declining	D
	llex aquliflorium	Holly	M SM Y			
	Quercus robur	Oak	SM			
	Sambucus nigra	Elder	Y			
	Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan	M SM			
	Shrubs			30		
,	Calluna vulagris	Heather	Y			
•	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	M D SM Y			
	Other			20		
	Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken	Covering under canopy			
	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble				
		Grass				
		Moss				
		Foxglove				
				100	Total	

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Trees			20	
	Crategus monogyna	Hawthorn	Μ		
	Quercus robur	Oak	SM		
	Shrubs			40	
Car Park	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	M D		
	Other			40	
	Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken	Covering		
	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble	Covering		
				100	Τc

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Shrubs			40	
	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	M D		
	Other			60	
	Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken	Covering		
2	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble	Covering		
2		Grass			
		Moss			
		Foxglove			
		Lichen			
				100	To

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Trees			20	
	Salix capera	Dog Willow	Μ		
	Shrubs			20	
	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	M D		
3	Other			60	
3	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble			
		Broom			
		Grass			
		Moss			
				100	To

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Trees				
	Betula pendula	Silver birch	M SM	60	
	Crategus monogyna	Hawthorn	м		
	Quercus robur	Oak	SM		
	Sambucus nigra	Elder	Μ		
	Shrubs				
	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	м		
4	Climbers			10	
	Hedera helix	lvy	On road side trees		
	Lonicera spp	Honeysuckle			
	Other			30	
	Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken	Covering		
	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble	Covering		
		Lovage			
				100	

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%
	Trees			20
	Betual pendula	Silver birch	M SM	
	Quercus robur	Oak	M SM	
	Sambucus nigra	Elder	м	
	Shrubs			20
	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	M SM	
5	Other			60
	Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken	Covering	
	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble	Covering	
		Nettle		
		Thistle		
		Grasses		
				100

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%]
	Shrubs			100	
6	Calluna vulagris	Heather	Y		
0	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	Y		
				100	Toto

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Trees			20	
	Betula pendula	Silver birch	M SM	20	
7	Quercus robur	Oak	M SM		
/	Shrubs			80	
	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	M D		
				100	To

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Trees			80	
	Betula pendula	Silver birch	M SM		
	Quercus robur	Oak	SM		
	Salix capera	Dog Willow	Μ		
	Shrubs			10	
8	Calluna vulagris	Heather	Y		
0	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	SM Y		
	Other			10	
		Moss			
		Grass			
		Lichen			
				100	To

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Shrubs			20	1
	Calluna vulagris	Heather	Y		1
9	Other			80	
		Lichen	Covering		1
				100	Total

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%
	Trees			10
	Betula pendula	Silver birch	SM	
	Shrubs			70
	Calluna vulagris	Heather	Y	
10	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	SM	
10	Other			20
	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble	Patchy	
		Lichen		
		Moss		
				100

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Trees			80	
	Betula pendula	Silver birch	м		
11	Salix capera	Dog Willow	Μ		
	Shrubs			20	
	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	м		
				100	Tota

Zone	Latin	Common	Condition / Comment	%	
	Shrubs			90	
12	Calluna vulagris	Heather	Y		
	Ulex europaeus	Gorse	M SM Y		
	Other			10	
		Moss			
		Grass			
		Lichen			
				100	



Panorama of zone 3 and beyond from Embankment 2 in zone 2.



Photographs from zone 4 from Road B1125, the western scrub corner and vehicle access road up to the concrete area.

Zone 5: the latest dumping bank.



р

Photographs from zone 5 on top of Embankment 3 near the concrete area, depicting mature gorse in patches and where gorse has been removed.





Zone 6 with the bench and sparse vegetation.

This shows zone 7 with mature and declining gorse.



Photographs show the area prone to water logging in zone 8 and the silver birch copse leading out towards zone 10.



Zone 10, the cross roads and Ralph's Mill Cottage.



v and **w** are part of zone 9, and show the dominance of lichen in this area, as well as the mature gorse in zone 7 wrapping around the disused pit.



x and **y** show zone 12 with the mature gorse of zone 2 on the banks and slopes of the disused pit. The far right photograph shows the gorse that is the edge of zone 11.









Conclusion

This project was about mapping the vegetation of Westleton Common. It was mapped out wholly by eye as the scale for both areas was so large. This method worked well and has produced a comprehensible vegetation survey, marking rough ages of maturity for each different vegetative species in each zone. As a basic vegetation survey for Westleton Common to be used as a tool to construct a management program for the heathland, I thus concentrated purely on the main vegetation species and did not stretch to identify each and every singular plant found. I based my judgments on large areas with clear differences in species, and did not focus on species per every metre of the area.

As a vegetation survey, it thus does not include users, fauna, history or the geology of the site. However to design a management plan for the Common, one should take into count the current fauna species that live and visit the site, also the current users: such as dog walkers, ramblers and playing children. Depending on the site's popularity, the management plan should take such users into account and it may influence the choices of conservation and maintenance methods.

Overall the vegetation survey gives a good basic understanding of the Common, and where the main different vegetative areas are to one another. It is not detailed, as the full the site was not explored completely, party due to the fact one actually cannot get to it. There therefore may be some errors in the survey, but as a whole to a 1:2500 scale it is usable as a correct visual comprehension of Westleton Common.