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December 2017 Garden Bird Watch this month 27th December to 2nd January 2018

The Village Plan:

Whilst assembling information about the village plan, Colin Marsh has been asking me about the hedgerows. The change of the banner for our *Biodiversity News* has coincided with my bedtime reading *A Natural History of the Hedgerow and ditches, dykes and dry-stone walls* by John Wright. One of the key features of the village hedges is the much older hedge line under the chalk hill. The author explains our situation thus. The rough grazing on the hillside prior to the Enclosure Acts starting around 1800 would have been owned by somebody – a Lord of the Manor for example, but would have been designated waste or common grazing for use by the villagers. The old hedge line extends westwards from the track from Osmington's Church Lane under the hill to the north end of the Waterworks Wood, continuing westwards from the gate to just north of Wyndings to Plaisters Lane, where hidden in the bramble is a boundary stone to the south-east of Russet Cottage. Then it crosses Plaisters Lane where there is another boundary stone south of Timberline. That field boundary follows a wet ditch south to Puddledock Lane. During the Enclosures, the fields between here and Osmington were enclosed in co-axial lines parallel with the Parish boundary. These fields would have been strip farmed by villages paying rent. The boundary between Osmington and the Waterworks Wood has many old coppice stools, especially ash, whilst the

enclosed hedges are mainly hawthorn, blackthorn some maple and dogwood.

Garden Bird Watch



We have had returns from 14 people and two people have sent limited information. The result is 38 species including one record of redwing, six people seeing song thrush, but no mistle thrush or fieldfare. Jon Campbell found a flock of 30 on the 12th November feeding on haws at the top of the hill on 12th November. On the few occasions, I have been out there have been plenty of redwing across the County. Six people have reported grey heron, no doubt looking in garden ponds for fish. Janet Craig reported a **greenfinch** with the virus infection on its beak and legs and she asks that people, clean their bird feeders periodically. Nobody has seen yellowhammer either in garden surveys or on the usual places on the hill top. Long-tailed tits and goldcrest present in good numbers.