

**SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT PROFORMA: NOT USED - SEE THE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT PROFORMA**

**LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT**

Surveyors(s): Clare Cross, John Edwards, Gathorne Girdlestone, J.Whybrow.....

Area name or number: PRISTON BROOK VALLEY.....

View Point Numbers: .....

Date: ...29.10 & 3.11.2013 Weather: Sunny / Blustery.....

- Look through all the questions before starting.
- For almost all the questions on Description and Views and Landmarks, just ring a word (or two) in each box that best fits what you know/see and, as necessary, add some notes about quality, condition etc. in the space below.
- The final Summary questions include their own instructions.
- Leave any questions that do not seem to apply.
- Take a form, clipboard, map, camera and a pen or two with you when you go out.
- Take any photos you think are useful (often more useful than some words) and add any photo names/numbers in the right hand boxes once you get back to 'base'.

**1. DESCRIPTION**

Character Element	Photo(s)
<p><b>A. Landform:</b> Flat Gently undulating Strongly undulating Steep valley Valley side/floor Plateau</p> <p><b>Priston Brook rises in Timsbury Parish and runs through a small section of Camerton Parish before entering Priston Parish. This assessment is only concerned with the section of Priston Brook Valley from the Camerton border to the outskirts of Priston village. This section of the stream valley has a gently undulating bottom and steep sides.</b></p>	<p>PB01.jpg 2.11.2013</p>
<p><b>B. Landcover:</b> Open farmland Farmland with trees/woods Woodland Parkland Wetland</p> <p><b>Following the course of the brook downstream there is open farmland, with woodland to the south. Priston Wood is classified Ancient Woodland and was first mentioned in 1258 as "Southwood". It has high value with 21 indicator species<sup>1</sup> and plays an important role for both animal and plant life.</b></p>	<p>PB02.jpg 2.11. 2013</p>

<sup>1</sup> Priston Farm Survey, Avon County & English Heritage, 1991 unpublished

<p><b>C. Landuse:</b> <i>Arable farmland Grassland Grazing Mixed Forestry Industrial Brownfield Orchards</i></p> <p><b>The valley fields are used for grazing [currently sheep] but above the valley, maize and miscanthus are also planted as ground cover for game birds. Game shooting is an important influence on the landscape of the valley.</b></p>	<p>PB02.jpg Sept 2013</p>
<p><b>D. Field Boundaries:</b> <i>Tall Clipped Intermittent Hedgerow With/without trees Fences Walls</i></p> <p><b>There are mixed hedges both with and without trees, some fences and also a short recent section of stonewall with large ammonite. In 1991, several hedges on the western parish boundary were surveyed and were listed as Grade I, with others as Grade II. Their ecological Grade B indicated valuable animal habitats and corridors coupled with more limited plant associations<sup>2</sup>. Elsewhere there are colonies of orchids.</b></p>	<p>PB03.jpg 2.11.2013</p> <p>PB04.jpg 2.11.2013</p>
<p><b>E. Field Sizes and Patterns:</b> <i>Small Medium Large Regular Angular Linear Irregular</i></p> <p><b>Field sizes are generally linear and small along the valley bottom but are very varied on the plateau to the north.</b></p>	
<p><b>F. Routeways:</b> <i>Few roads Dense road network Tracks Straight/Winding /Narrow</i></p> <p><b>Priston Brook has long had an old trackway that has been upgraded over the centuries into Priston Lane. It partly lies along the stream side and then climbs away up the hill to the end of Tunley village and the old hundreds of Wellow, Keynsham and Chew meeting point. [Local names are Watery Lane in the valley bottom changing to Wood Lane as it climbs up by Priston Wood to the top of the hill.] There are several footpaths in the valley and a popular circular route runs from near Wood Lodge through the valley and back past the cricket field to the centre of the village.</b></p>	<p>PB05.jpg 2.11.2013</p>

<p><b>G. Buildings and Structures:</b> <i>What manmade elements are in the landscape? Village(s)/Town Isolated Farms Barns Groups of dwellings Pylons Masts Wires. How do they 'sit' and what natural features influence that?</i></p> <p><b>Above the valley there is one corrugated Dutch Barn near Lammas Field Farm [the farm itself lies over the parish border]. The barn houses 3 nesting boxes for owls.</b></p>	
<p><b>H. Water and Drainage:</b> <i>Stream River Reservoir Wet ditches Ponds Lake</i></p> <p><b>The stream is supplemented by several springs on the valley hillside. It has an artificial dam, which ponds the stream to create a habitat for ducks [for game shooting]. However, the pond also inhibits the flow of water downstream so that the stream can run dry through the village in summers of low rainfall.</b></p>	<p>PB06.jpg 29.10.2013</p>
<p><b>I. Enclosure and Scale:</b> <i>Tight Enclosed Open Exposed/Intimate Small Large Vast</i></p> <p><b>The valley of Priston Brook is an intimate, enclosed linear space with rising ground on both sides.</b></p>	

**2. VIEWS AND LANDMARKS** (mark on the map)

<p><b>A. Views:</b> <i>Sweeping Channeled Long Short Glimpsed Across/to a place or landmark.</i></p> <p><b>A long view, which in fact terminates the vista when looking east is Duncorne Hill with a possible prehistoric hilltop camp. Nearby, but not seen from the valley is Tunley hillcamp.</b></p> <p><b>Views from higher parts of the north side of the valley, towards the village show the landmark of Priston Church tower with it's distinctive golden cock weather vane.</b></p> <p><b>Also towards the long raised mound forming the spoil [or Batch] of Priston Colliery 1917-1930, now covered in grass and trees but once giving employment to 180 local men, several of whom lived in Priston village. At 750 feet, it was the last deep mine to be sunk in Somerset.</b></p>	<p>PB01.jpg 2.11.2013</p> <p>PB07.jpg 2.11.2013</p>
<p><b>B. Landmarks:</b> <i>Buildings Structures Natural features History Archaeology</i></p> <p><b>Located at the village edge is a tump alongside which is a large oblong stone, much used as a convenient place to sit and admire the view.</b></p> <p><b>The Dutch barn is also a landmark when facing away from the village with Farmborough Common [known locally as 'One Tree Hill'] in the neighbouring parish behind.</b></p>	<p>PB08.jpg PB09.jpg 2.11.2013</p>

**History:** The stream's Anglo-Saxon name was the Lox which changed to Southbrook in the Middle Ages and later to Priston Brook.

**Archaeology:** Sited on the hillside above the stream by the old hollow way, on the edge of the current village, were two round barrows noted by John Skinner in 1821, before they were destroyed by excavation and the construction of a limekiln <sup>3</sup>.  
 [There were two more round barrows further upstream at Wallmead over the parish border].

PB10.jpg  
2.11.2013

**3. SUMMARY**

**A. Scenic Quality:** *Think about sounds, smells and colours, how it makes you feel, does it feel tranquil? Think about balance (harmonious - chaotic) and diversity (uniform – complex) Seasonal features can also be important.*

**The Priston Brook valley's topography encompasses intimacy in the valley bottom contrasting with its steepish hillsides. The whole is given life by the flash of moving water, the changing colours of the ancient woodland and the movement of sheep.**

**B. Activities and Associations:** *What do people do in this landscape? Work and/or leisure? Do people paint or photograph it? Are there local poems or stories? What makes you identify with it or value it?*

**Children play on the slopes nearest the village and in the stream in several places, while tobogganing is a favourite pastime when conditions allow. The public footpaths are well used by walkers and joggers.**

**C: In a few words or a sentence or two, what are for you the key positive features about this area? What makes it special?**

**The scooped "u" shape of the valley; the flash of water; the beauty of the woods.**

**D: In a few words or a sentence or two, what are for you the key negative features about this area? What detracts from it?**

**None**



PB01.jpg



PB03.jpg



PB02.jpg



PB04.jpg



PB05.jpg



PB06.jpg



PB07.jpg



PB08.jpg



PB09.jpg



PB10.jpg