



**CLINTON DEVON ESTATES**

*Doing our part for our part of the world*

## Stantyway Farm

**Background:** Until 2015 Stantyway Farm was tenanted by Martin Williams and managed primarily for the production of arable crops. The tenancy period of Mr Williams saw the arrival of Cirl Buntings at the site. This rare red-listed bird was nearly lost from the UK in the latter part of the 20th century, with its decline associated with changes in farming practices, particularly the reduction in the growing of spring-sown cereal crops and the consequent loss of weedy winter stubbles. The small population at Stantyway is believed to be the eastern-most breeding population. A number of other rare wildlife species are also known from the site, including Brown Hare.



After the retirement of Mr Williams in 2014, the 100-hectare farm was taken back in hand by Clinton Devon Estates' own in-house Farm Partnership. To support other farming areas of the Estate, much of which are organic, it was decided to put Stantyway farm into organic conversion. This process takes two years to complete. **The farm will be officially certified organic in January 2018.**

In addition to continuing to manage the farm productively, it was also important to the Estate to build on the Cirl Bunting success of Mr Williams. To this end, and with the support of the RSPB, an agri-environment scheme was applied for, and awarded in 2016. This will facilitate the planting of 4 km of hedgerows, the expansion of wildlife buffer strips along field margins, the planting of bird feed mixes, and ensure that the choice of crops supports Cirl Buntings and other threatened farmland birds. In particular, these species benefit from the presence of rough grassland associated with field margins to support their summer food of insects (especially grasshoppers and crickets), and over winter weedy stubbles to feed them with seed in the winter.



**May 2016 Bioblitz:** The ultimate objective of this Bioblitz was to improve our understanding of the wildlife that Stantway Farm supports and how this might be further improved. It provided an honest baseline assessment of the wildlife that occurs on an intensively managed farm, and facilitate our ability to be able to monitor future wildlife gains or losses.

369 species of invertebrates were recorded including one nationally venerable and seven nationally scarce species. A nationally scarce lichen *Rinodina pityrea* was found on an old fence post on the cliff path.

Over the coming years we hope that the conversion to organic status, the planting of new hedgerows, the creating of buffer strips, the planting of specialised bird mixes and the choice of crops will allow wildlife to thrive and help illustrate that productive farming and wildlife can co-exist.

**Crops at Stantway. These will be planted on a rotational basis**

<b>Crop</b>	<b>Planted</b>	<b>Harvested</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Clover and grass</b>		May - July (three year rotations)	To fertilise soil; silage
<b>Wheat</b>	October	August	Animal Feed
<b>Spring Oats</b>	April	August	Animal Feed
<b>Spring Barley</b>	April	August	Animal Feed
<b>Bird Seed Mix</b>	May	Left for 12 months	To feed birds



**Bird Mix Crop, Stantway Farm, August 2015**