

SOUTH OF ENGLAND HEDGE LAYING SOCIETY

Reg Charity No 1046124

Promoting the craft of hedge laying,
training, competitions and countryside management
Autumn 2019



**A REASON
FOR
OPTIMISM**



**Centre for
Ecology & Hydrology**

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

**Quantifying the impact of future land use scenarios
to 2050 and beyond - Final Report**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear members

Welcome to the 2019 / 2020 season. We are underway with the first Ploughing match hedgelaying competition completed & the first Coppicing day carried out successfully. Thank to everyone who turnout to help with the Coppicing. A great effort to start the season off.

A thank you to Ian Runcie for competently looking after the news letter over the last few years, you will be missed. Hello to anyone who would like to step in to Ian's shoes, please get in touch. I look forward to seeing you all on a hedgerow soon, best wishes for the cutting season 2019 - 2020.

Best wishes Phil Hart, Chairman.

Editor's Notes

Apologies for the late production of this edition. As I spend more time on a house restoration project and after five years, this will be my last newsletter as editor. So late is it that I have called it the 'Autumn' edition Rather than 'August'! I wanted to end on an optimistic note and, much to my surprise, I did not have to look far.

So pleased to read Reg talking about the Lewes Swift Group. Lewes is one of the most important strongholds of this bird in the UK. He mentions most of the weird and wonderful points about this bird. One other is that it is a very ancient creature. The original swifts had a nodding acquaintance with the dinosaurs.

Ian Runcie

Reasons for optimism?

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Quantifying-the-impact-of-future-land-use-scenarios-to-2050-and-beyond-Full-Report.pdf>



I was pessimistic in the last newsletter that no one seemed to be

taking any notice of the studies which showed the benefits of hedges in reducing flash flooding. I may have been wrong.

The Committee on Climate Change of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology report annually to the Government and their final report came out in November 2018. This gives rise to considerable optimism as far as hedges are concerned.

Their remit is to advise on the future of land use in the UK up to 2050 and beyond. They are the rural arm of the government's attempts to reduce greenhouse gas production over the next quarter of a century or so. Their interests include: CO2 absorption, diet, Flood prevention and conservation. They set various levels of ambition of what can be achieved

and their highest level of ambition is very good news for hedges.

The highest level ambitions include: reduced Nitrogen use, increased indoor food plant production, reduced consumption of red meat, increased cereal productivity, reduced food waste and better use of that waste.

They are also pushing for an increase in forestation and a **40% increase in the total length of hedgerows** with 30% of this being used for biomass fuels. Hedgelink says that this equates to 200,000 km of new hedges across rural and urban landscapes, roughly half the length of Britain's road network.

Great news but you may have spotted the challenge for the hedge layer: 30% use of the hedges for biomass ie a third of the hedge geared towards fuel production. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, the Bocage hedges in Normandy are allowed to grow to considerable heights and then cut down on a rotation system for chipping for firewood. If you think about it. our system of occasional pruning and the subsequent, often indiscriminate, burning is a relatively wasteful business. However, there are several reasons why the Bocage system would not do for the majority

of hedges in this country. One is aesthetics, we like our landscape dotted with hedges we can see over. It is unlikely that the general public will want our hedgerows replaced with bands of large trees which, every so often, are cut right down. And anyway there is little comfort in that system for the hedge layer although there may be for the tree surgeon.

So, having just accepted that the main purpose of hedge laying is now conservation, we are faced with the possibility that future grants and contracts may stipulate the requirement that 30% of the hedge be available for fuel.

How do we achieve that? Well DEFRA has for many years recommended that hedges be planted and laid containing a number of

intermittent standard trees. It would obviously not be possible to lay a hedge with every third tree as a standard but I don't think this would be necessary. If we left, say, somewhere between 5 and 10% as standards and laid round them, we might achieve the situation where 30% or more of the total weight of the wood in the hedge is available for fuel. The ideal ratio of standards to laid trees should not be difficult to work out. The devil is in the detail.

Another possibility that has occurred to me is to allow hedges at corners of some fields, where there little or no value in the land, to expand into small copses. I'm sure there are plenty of other ways.

Ian Runcie

Here's a link to a fine article on hedging in an American Magazine featuring our very own Gary Moore with some good before and after pics.

<https://www.farmcollector.com/farm-life/humble-hedge-zmwz19junzhur>



HEDGE DONE



THE NEW SIGNS



New omnidirectional direction signs for the coming season. The current ones were not doing the business - falling apart and the remaining ones always pointing in the wrong direction. Stakes by David Dunk, artwork and everything else by me. The billhook is an Elwell 10" 3901. Why yellow and black and not something more green and cosy? Yellow and black stands out more which, after all, is the main point of a sign.

Frank Wright

Training in Hedge Laying

For dates see diary below

Fees

Hedge Laying: the course (days 1 to 4) £150.

1 taster day £60

Tool Sharpening: £10

Coppicing days: FREE to Members

If you are unable to attend a training event please let us know. No shows and late cancellations are a headache for the organisers. If you are unable to attend an event the following fees apply:

Over 1 week – no fee

Between 2 days and 1 week - £10

Less than 2 days – £20

No show / the night before / on the day - £30

Experienced current members

A section of hedge will be allocated for experienced current members wishing to lay hedge, if you wish to please let Phill Piddell know which event(s).

Maps

For each event a reminder email is sent about 1 week before, and Maps are emailed a few days later

To Join

To take part in any of these events you need to join the society so you are covered by the Society's insurance. Membership is £15 per annum. Please bring your membership cards to all events.

To get booking information for these events, send a completed membership application form (below) to Phill Piddell.

South of England Hedge-Laying Society

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (or renewal)

April 2017 to March 2018



PRESIDENT:

Peter Tunks
The Coach House, Waltersville Way
Horley, RH6 9EP
Tel: 01293 784826 / 07836 75757

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:

Phill Piddell, 1 Hope House Farm
Cottage Crouch Lane, Sandhurst
Cranbrook, Kent
TN18 5PD tel: 01580 850768

Annual membership of the Society	£15 per person
Lapel Badge	£5 per badge
Total	
Please treat my membership as a Gift Aid donation (YES / NO)	

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.

PLEASE USE CLEAR BLOCK CAPITALS

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____ Email: _____

Tel: _____ Mobile: _____

Emergency Contact (Name and Number) _____

Age (if under 18): _____ Occupation: _____

It is your responsibility to ensure that the Society is informed of any changes in your communication details.

Please return the completed form to Phill Piddell. You will receive a Membership Card in the post.

Alternatively please email the above details to phill.piddell@bt.com and transfer the money directly to our bank account: SORT CODE **20-49-76** Account **90867381** (South of England Hedge Laying Soc)

Renew online - www.sehls.co

FOR YOUR DIARY

14 th Sept	Coppicing BluntsWood Haywards Heath
21st Sept	West Grinstead competition, Applesham Farm
20th-22nd ^h Sept	Weald Woodfair, Bentley
23 rd Sept.	Coppicing. Furzefield Wood New Way Lane, Hurstpierpoint
5 th Oct	Hurstpierpoint Competition
5-6 th Oct	Autumn Show and Game Fair, Ardingly Show Ground
12th Oct	Hedge Laying 1, Isfield
19 th Oct	Possible hedgelaying RSPB, Pulborough
26th Oct	National Hedgelaying Competition
2nd Nov	Coppicing, Bluntswood, Haywards Heath
9 th Nov	Hedge laying 2 Street, West Sussex
24 th Nov.	Tool sharpening Plumpton college
7 th Dec	Hedge Laying 3 Horsted Keynes
28 th Dec	Coppicing, Bluntswood, Haywards Heath
4th Jan 2020	Improvers Day, 4 Hastings
18 th Jan	Coppicing, Bluntswood, Haywards Heath
25 th Jan	President vs. Chairman Magham Down
1 st Feb	Wimpole Competition
16 th Feb (Sunday)	Annual Competition Fletching
1 st Feb	AGM Plumpton College
29 th Feb (also 7 th March?)	Skills of the Hills, TBA
14 th March	Fun Day, Fletching
21 st March	Extra day, Magham Down

NOTICES

Donation of £2126 to Chailey Heritage

Following the Charity Fun Day in March at Seddlescombe, Phil Hart, Mike Parrott and Matthew Beard attending a cheque presentation ceremony at Chailey Heritage Foundation recently and a cheque for £2108 and £18 cash were given to the Foundation.



Chailey Heritage does a tremendous job providing care and education to children and young adults who have complex disabilities and health needs, who cannot be accommodated in mainstream education. Chailey Heritage are world leaders and innovators in this care provision and with innovation comes significant additional costs which are not met by state funding.

To visit Chailey Heritage is an inspiration of human endeavour, perseverance and kindness and we all found the experience very humbling. The money given to Chailey will go towards the farm on site – Patchwork Farm, which is a brilliant experience for the children and makes a real difference to their lives.

More information about Chailey Heritage can be found at :-

<https://www.chf.org.uk/>

Jenna Durdle, Fundraising Manager said, “We are extremely grateful to everyone from the South of England Hedgelaying Society for continuing to support Chailey Heritage Foundation. The generosity of your members means a great deal to us. The funds you have donated will enable us to develop our therapeutic farm, Patchwork Farm. Use daily by the young people who we support, the funds will be used to help us plant trees to create more shelter for the animals, and to purchase raised flower beds and bee-friendly plants. The young people at Chailey Heritage get a great deal of enjoyment from spending time on our farm, and without voluntary donations it just wouldn’t be possible.”

So thanks to all those who participated in the Charity Fun Day at Seddlescombe and got sponsorship- the money will be well spent. The Society enthusiastically continues to support Chailey Heritage.
Mathew Beard.

NOTICES



The David Marsden Memorial Hedge

When David Marsden became a postman in Lindfield he was no longer able to come to our hedge laying days hedge laying days. Not wanting to leave the society, he took on the post of secretary's assistant, a post he held until his sudden death on 13 November 2003.

After his death, John Blake, who was a past president, tried to find a piece of public land in Lindfield to plant a memorial hedge in David's honour. It took John many months of negotiation with the council to agree on some land in Backwoods Road in Lindfield. Members of the society planted hawthorn whips and erected a memorial plaque on 20 January 2007. The words on the brass plate were composed by the then membership secretary Dick Morley.

Later, when the hedge was tall enough, Ron Mouland, another of our past presidents, laid the hedge. Tragically it was the last hedge he laid before his own untimely death, and this fact is also recorded on the post.



This year the hedge and, particularly, the plaque were looking scruffy. In August Tim Hughes came with an array of tools and cut the wayward hedge and the surrounding grass and weeds. Mike Parrott replaced the oak board on which the brass plaque is mounted; the new board was supplied by the Tottington Woodlanders group in Small Dole. The oak was felled in the winter of 2016 and

then cut up on site in Small Dole as part of a Heavy Horse Logging day held in August 2017 in the woods. Anne, David's widow belongs to the nearby bowls club and is pleased with our continued interest and care of her husband's memorial. Mike Parrott and Chris Burchell-Collins



Heavy Horse Logging day held in August 2017

NOTICES

Even more optimism

I'm renovating a house in Edinburgh. Some folk there are very excited by the reappearance of the Northern Brown Argus butterfly. A species that is unique to Arthur's Seat. Due to over collection and some land use change, it disappeared in 1869 and was thought to be extinct.

It turned up again recently, having presumably been sensibly hiding in the wilder areas of Arthur's seat and is now increasing in numbers.

However a species confined to such a small area, especially in the middle of a capital city has got to be endangered. So a scheme called A 'Square Metre for Butterflies' has been set up to encourage people with some roof space to plant a rock rose up there. The Northern Argus is a high flyer and the rock rose is its caterpillar's favourite plant. The idea is to provide a corridor through which the insect can establish itself in the surrounding countryside and also maybe allow a few different butterflies to find their way into the city.

Hedges also provide wildlife corridors and maybe, if the CEH report is implemented, we will be looking at an increase in urban hedges as well as rural ones.

Meanwhile I'll be buying a rock rose pot.

Ian Runcie

**THE
NORTHERN
BROWN
ARGUS**



Bird Watch July 19

One thing is certain, this has been a very good breeding season for common species and many young birds are in the garden. Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Blue and Great Tits, House Sparrows, Robins, Goldfinches and more are filling the bushes and plants near the house. Not all are good news. I have a new raised bed that Pheasants and House Sparrows delight in using as a dust bath to the detriment of the vegetable seeds I sowed. At least this recent rain has stopped that!

The heavy rain may well have an effect on some of the Warblers that make their nests in low herbage that often gets soaked and beaten down to the ground. Some birds, Blackcaps in particular, make their flimsy straw basket of a nest below the shield of trailing stems forming a sort of umbrella over the nest that, unless high winds also occur, it remains dry and the vulnerable chicks safe. Ground nesters often make their nests in the shelter of a grassy tuft protecting it from the elements and unless flooded out, will survive.

One of the most difficult birds to study is the Swift. These are the black, arc-shaped birds that scream around the older houses of towns. Fewer of them return from Africa in recent years. The

reasons for this are being researched and the lack of nest sites is often given. Not all that many years ago they bred in the towers of both All Saints and St. Michael's Churches and as far as I know, the same conditions of access for them remain but they are now absent. I can remember one getting into St. Michael's while the ladies of the Flower Club were preparing for the Flower Festival and was buzzing them at head height. It could do them no harm, but the concern was of it injuring itself. I caught it in a butterfly net and ringed it. In the hand it is quite a strong bird showing a large pink gape, so perfect for catching flying insects.



The amazing fact concerning these birds is that they cannot come to ground. Their legs are so short and wings so long that if grounded, cannot get lift off. This happens when heavy rain beats them down and some do perish in this way. Another astounding thing is that, since they do not breed until three or four years old. When the young tumble out of

the nest, they are on the wing that long and many live for over twenty years. They even roost on the wing at high altitude. When nesting in cavities in buildings is the only time they rest. They collect any nesting material that they use while flying, with a mix of saliva. Some nests last decades. They even mate on the wing! Efforts have been made to encourage new colonies of Swifts by erecting nest boxes for them and even using their calls to attract them, but it can take many years to be a success. At Henfield it was eight years before a new colony established. Some new buildings incorporate hollow brick-type nest sites that are used if not only by Swifts but any cavity breeding species. A good innovation.

Lewes, with many older buildings, has always been a stronghold for Swifts, but they have declined even there. A “Swift Group” has formed to record the numbers of nests and provide and protect suitable sites for them. Year by year actual numbers will be recorded so an accurate trend established. Valuable Ornithology.

August 2019

Bird Watch

This is the time of year when we can measure the success or otherwise of the breeding season and comparisons made against previous years. Recently, we checked the number of occupied House Martin nests on the college. Last year there were thirty-nine, a small

decrease from before. Counting only those with evidence of occupation, faces showing at the entrance, adults flying in with food or a generous heap of droppings below, we certainly recorded thirty-five. Others, where the nest was complete, may well have birds incubating eggs or brooding small young but not showing other signs of occupation will be re-visited later. Several nests had been taken over by House Sparrows which I believe has happened elsewhere locally.

At the college farm only one pair of Swallows bred last year compared to a dozen or more a few years ago but the good news is that three pairs are nesting this summer. They are very faithful to their breeding sites, usually returning to nest in the same building as in previous years.



Under the special licence, we checked the Barn Owl nest boxes last week. In an open sided horse shelter that had been rebuilt after the 1987 hurricane a box had been installed. It had not been used in all those years until now. This nest contained three white fluffy but

really ugly chicks that only a mother could love but doing well as there was a big larder of freshly caught voles provided. This will probably mean that the smallest will not be eaten by the largest chick, a strategy to ensure that at least one survives a nesting attempt when food is short. This year seems to have plenty of rodents in the fields, a success of the Stewardship Strips at field margins where the clumpy grass provides the right habitat for their needs.

We then visited our usual box, only two fields away where we did not expect to find it occupied. We thought the usual pair had relocated to the new site. To our surprise there were two large feathering young. We also captured the female at the entrance of the box to find she was already ringed but not with one of mine. On receiving the information, it showed she was a 2014 nestling from a brood of five from SUFFOLK! I have wondered how she reached Sussex. Barn Owls do not fly very high unlike smaller migrant birds. Did she cross London? Did she fly over both arms of the M25?

Perhaps she crossed the Thames Estuary and came to us via Kent Who knows but she travelled `181 kilometres an extraordinary distance for a Barn Owl to travel. The value of the Ringing Scheme well shown. When we returned her to the box and her chicks, she stayed there and went back to sleep.

The following day another box, not much more than half a mile away, also had two young, also feathering well. This time the adult stayed perched in the Oak tree watching the proceedings. There is a good population of Barn Owls in the district, but we usually see them only unexpectedly at night from a car. I heard of another of the ones we ringed locally from a brood of six, also in 2014, an exceptional “vole year” being found breeding near Fletching. This a more normal distance for them to disperse.

Reg Lanaway

President	Peter Tunks 01293 784826
Vice President	Bob Hunt 01273 400898
Chairman & Training Officer	Phil Hart 0771 705 4172
Assistant training officer	Graham West 07870219429
Vice Chairman	Frank Wright 01273 493309
Secretary	Chris Burchall-Collins 01273 495026
Treasurer	Mathew Beard 07976009549
Assistant Secretary:	Vacant
Membership Secretary: and Competition Secretary	Phill Piddell 01580 850768
Newsletter Editor	Ian Runcie 01273 567278
Awards Officer:	Mike Parrot 01273 410292 07910 732575
Coppicing Officer and committee member	Tim Hughes 01444892742
Committee Member	Darren Hulbert 07743 090000 01273 553967
Show Officer:	Chris Burchall-Collins
Transport Manager:	Bob Hunt 01273 400898
Hedge Manager:	Frank Wright 01273493309
National Reps	Phil Hart 0771 705 4172 & John French 01424 772371

**Items for next Newsletter by mid
November please**

acknowledgements: Swift Carl Wilson Flickr. Swallow, Woodland Trust