

SOUTH OF ENGLAND HEDGE LAYING SOCIETY

Reg Charity No 1046124



August 2011

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everybody,

I hope you have all had a relaxing summer (what there was of it) and it was nice to see some of the new members at the summer shows.

Well the new season is nearly here and if the enthusiasm is the same as last season, it should be a good one - some easy hedges and some difficult ones which I think is good as you are not going to further your hedge-laying skills if all the hedges are easy.

For all of you hard core hedge-layers, we have a nice new points trophy - four competitions = four opportunities to win points starting at the Laughton Ploughing Match.

Hope to see the rest of you at the first training day.

Bye for now

Gary

Hi everybody,

I can't believe the new season is nearly upon us. Must be my age but the years are certainly going by faster than they once were!!

As I write this note, our cities are in turmoil with rioting and all sorts of associated crimes and the world economic system seems to be in meltdown. How nice it will be to get out into the fields and countryside away from the doom and gloom that hits us every time we switch on the News.

Now its nagging time again! Please get your subs to Dick Morley as soon as possible. Enclosed you will find a renewal form which we would be grateful if you could complete (CLEARLY!!!) and return to Dick with your £10. As well as making you eligible to enter competitions etc., filling in the form will ensure we have your up-to-date contact details (these will not be shared with anybody else). **DON'T FORGET, NO SUBS = NO COMPETITIONS. NO COMPETITIONS = NO POINTS TROPHY.**

Best wishes,

Rachel

HEDGE RAMBLINGS

When is a hedge not a hedge?

I was browsing through the gardening section of my up-market Saturday newspaper the other weekend when I noticed what appeared to be an article on hedge-laying. Well, the photograph gave that impression. There was a young, attractive blonde lady dressed in a fetching top with the sleeves pushed up above her elbows, wielding a billhook. She was wearing heavy duty gloves but from the photograph it was difficult to see the extent of her other safety clothing! There was no sign of a helmet, ear defenders or other safety clothing to suggest a chainsaw was being used either.

The small section of hedge in the photograph was only large enough to show three stakes in place and the binding had not commenced. I thought the accompanying 350 words or so would tell me all I needed to know about hedge-laying.

It started by telling the reader that old farm hedges usually consisted of hawthorn or holly and became mixed over time due to the activities of wildlife. Farmers would then have to maintain these hedges to keep animals in or out as the case may be by laying or coppicing. The modern methods of annual flailing to limit the height and width did nothing for increasing the thickness of the hedge but only served to produce deadwood and rubbish from undesirable sources.

A gentleman known to the author had been struggling over the last few years to remove deadwood, ivy, brambles and the other undesirable items from an old hawthorn hedge to improve the vigour and was now faced with the need to fill the gaps he had created in his hedge.

Now the advice: He could try filling the gaps with young hawthorn whips, which are sold in bundles for planting during the dormant months and give them some protection with plastic guards until they have "taken". Or, the author's guess was that he would keep his eye on the ball and control the new growth with an annual blitz on the ivy and brambles, then the woody trunks from the hedge would fill the gaps by themselves with new leafy shoots, especially if he was to cut them down to ground level to make them shoot again.

So there you have it. An attractive girl laying a hedge which would appear to have nothing to do with the subject matter and I am still left wondering what whips and balls have to do with hedge-laying!

Bill Hook



NATURE NOTES

At what was quite late in the winter, early spring period we put up over a dozen new nest boxes in the woods and around the college estate. Great must have been the need for them as every one has a Blue tit or Great tit sitting on large clutches of eggs and indeed the first one hatched young on May 3rd. Fewer old trees with natural cavities are left now, either for safety reasons or in the name of tidiness, so these birds are desperate to breed in enclosed sites and we can provide them.

A feature of this spring has been the very healthy number of Warblers that have returned. Each fifty yards of hedgerow has been claimed by a pair of Whitethroats. The male's spluttering song is rendered while he hovers over his territory, at first to attract a mate and later to strengthen their bond as she incubates eggs in a small basketlike nest in the nettles and brambles at the base of the hedge. Some forty or so years ago there was great concern for this species when only about twenty per cent of the usual population returned. The problem was found to be unfavourable weather conditions in the part of Africa in which they spend the winter. Since then their numbers have recovered and last year they had a most successful breeding season.

At last we have had rainfall. The amount that fell on that weekend in the first week of June, though not heavy, equalled all that had fallen in April and May. The crops both in the fields and in the gardens were in desperate need of moisture. It is hoped that what fell was sufficient for the moment to restore the possible damage. All of the cereal crops, wheat, barley and oats, have come into ear early and on very short straw, the worry being that the gain would be small and not plump enough to yield a decent crop for the needs of the nation either as stock feed or milling and that bedding will be in short supply.

I always enjoy seeing creatures in the wild that are scarce or difficult to find, particularly when venturing out with a plan to find them. One of my favourites is the White Admiral butterfly, chocolate brown with a white "V" on the wings. It is special to Ancient Woodlands with Honeysuckle as the plant food at the caterpillar stage of its life cycle. From late June until mid-August they are on the wing patrolling their territory and feeding on Bramble flowers. I usually find my first of the year along Streat Lane on the east side of Brock's Wood. This year one came to me, as I was in the garden - it flew past my ear and on to a Buddleia.

It is difficult to imagine that some butterflies and moths come to Britain from across the Channel. The coastal bird observatories are also involved in the study of migrant moths of which there are many species. One of the most exciting to see is the Hummingbird Hawk Moth, several of which have arrived this year. They need no describing as their action is exactly as their name implies. They hover over flowers extracting nectar with a long tongue. The orange, black and white of the tail is very obvious. When at rest, which is not often, with wings closed across their back they are well camouflaged and look rather insignificant.

I have continued the study of Swallows in the locality and as always find out some astonishing facts about them. We caught up some of the breeding adults at the college stables recently and recaptured a male that we ringed as an adult in 2007 over the same stable door. Being of unknown age but certainly at least one year old at ringing, the minimum number of times it had travelled to South Africa is five in each direction. What a feat of navigation! I did also recapture one of last year's nestlings, a male, unusually returning to breed at the colony where it was hatched. This is only the third time in nearly twenty years we have recorded doing so.

Two species that seem to be around in huge numbers are Wood Pigeons that stripped all of my sprouts and broccoli and Jackdaws that descend in a great flock on to the ensiled Maize to devour the seeds. There are young birds amongst them all but through the spring there have been such numbers that many must be non-breeding birds. I don't know at what age they first breed but they, as a species, are very successful.

Already, in mid July, Grey Squirrels are eating the developing Hazel nuts. The remains of the shells are littered beneath the trees that overhang the lane. What chance for us to gather any when they would be ripe?

Reg Lanaway



BROWN HAIRSTREAK

Thecla betula

The eggs of a rare butterfly, the Brown hairstreak, were found on blackthorn outshoots from the hedge that divides Woodside from Lewes Field on Plumpton College Estate. This species was thought to have been extinct in East Sussex from the late 19th century, but are making something of a comeback, albeit in very small numbers. Butterfly Conservation has no previous records of it within the 5km tetrad containing the College estate and Wales Farm.

The butterfly eggs were found in the crook of the thorn and stem about a metre from the ground, and the caterpillars also live in blackthorn: as such they are vulnerable to flailing, etc. they only breed in warm, south-facing blackthorn hedges

More details can be found in the Species Action Plan 1998, Compiled by N. A. D. Bourn and M. S. Warren.

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email: nbourn@butterfly-conservation.org

<http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/>



PLOUGHING MATCH COMPETITION DETAILS

These competitions all have an Open class, with Hurstpierpoint Match having an Under 21 class. The Open Class competitions make up the circuit in the South of England Hedge Laying Society's Points Trophy Competition, plus our own Annual Competition. Last year a trial run of this competition was held, with 17 competitors taking part in these 3 ploughing match competitions.

To enter the Hedge Laying Competitions run at a Ploughing Match, contact the following people for entry details.

Match	Competition Date	Contact
Laughton	10 th September 2011 (note this competition date is separate to the Ploughing match which is held on Wednesday the 21 st September)	Mary Masters 1 Deans Farm Cottages, Piddinghoe, Newhaven. BN9 9AL 01273 517824 Mary.m@btclick.com
West Grinstead	17 th September 2011	Chris Passmore Applesham Farm, Coombes, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 0RP 01273 452016
Hurstpierpoint	1 st October 2011	John Blake 10 Harvest Close, Lindfield, Haywards Heath. RH16 2LW 01444 482414

SPRING SOCIETY SURVEY

Many thanks go to the 30 people that took part in the Spring Survey. Your information is very valuable with a variety of responses. Three things to come out of this are the wish for people to share car journeys, this will have the economic benefit but also the strengthening of the society due to extra time people will have to discuss hedge laying and the day's events. A car sharing list is to be drawn up and circulated so people can get in contact with each other and make arrangements for lifts.

The second item that the survey highlighted was the interest in a "Tool Sharpening Master Class", It was decided at the recent Committee meeting to incorporate this into the training days. Please bring along your sharpening gear on these events so you can get the maximum being from these sessions.

The Third item was an Advanced Training Day for various topics, these ranged from Root Laying, Back Laying, Whiff Making, to "how to get up to speed to compete in Ploughing Match Competitions.

A separate course is to be set up. A venue has been found for a suitable hedge at Punnett's Town, East Sussex, and the date needs to be set, more details will be circulated as they become available. The fee has been set at £50 per person.

Congratulations go to Mark Hudson for being drawn out as the winner of the £10 Voucher.

SEHLS CAR-SHARING LIST



The following people have shown an interest in car sharing in the spring survey. Any members wishing to share a lift please feel free to contact people on the list to find out if they are going to the same event as yourself. You can then make travel arrangements between yourselves. It's interesting to see how spread out the members of the society are.

If anyone else would like to be included on this list, please pass you details to Phil Hart.

Name	Location	Post Code	Landline	Mobile	Email
Terry Standen	Staplehurst Kent	TN12 0RA	01580 892090		tstanden@free.uk.com
Mark Hudson	Hastingleigh, Ashford, Kent	TN25 5HN	01233 750411	07860 791478	markhudson@hotmail.co.uk
Steve Wright	Walderslate Chatham, Kent	ME5 8BX	01634 864354	07801 386264	Stevewright50@btinternet.com
Roger Ferrand	Steyning West Sussex	BN44 3QG			golf7vbr@gmail.com
Steven Thorns	Hurstpierpoint West Sussex	BN6 9TL	01273 835658		
Lucas Burman	Pullborough West Sussex	RH20 1BG		07909 546358	burmansmaintenance@gmail.com
Andrew Cotterill	Tunbride Wells Kent	TN1 2BB	01892 532032	07790 435404	a.cotterill@blueyonder.co.uk
George Streete	Wadhurst East Sussex	TN5 6TY	01892 782553		
Paul Hambly	Wadhurst East Sussex	TN5 6DE	01892 785791	07802 719438	paul@hambly.net
Mrs Jane Rudd	Gillingham Kent	ME7 4JG	01634 572778		janeandcolin13@hotmail.co.uk
Michael Hutchings	Wantage Oxon	OX12 9BU	01235 769072	07972 874661	Michael@dr-rogg.co.uk
John Blake	Lindfield West Sussex	RH16 2LW	01444 482414	07788 758043	
Dick Morley	Ditchling West Sussex	BN6 8XB	01273 843633		
Andy Aires	Chiddingfold Surrey	GU8 4TD	01483 420088	07860 244192	andy@mantaplan.com
David Crouch	Laughton Lewes	BN8 6BZ	01323 811557	07767 440066	
Roger Taylor	Plumstead London	SE18 3NY	020 88546593	07767 497242	dreolin@btopenworld.com



FOR YOUR DIARY

2011		
August		
Sept	10 th	Laughton & District Agricultural Society Annual Hedgelaying Competition, Middle Farm, Firle, Lewis BN8 6LJ
	16 th – 18 th	Bentley Wood Fair
	17 th	West Grinstead & District Ploughing & Agricultural Society Annual Ploughing Match, Westons Farm, Itchingfield, Horsham
Oct	1 st & 2 nd	South of England Autumn Show & Game Fair
	1 st	Hurstpierpoint Ploughing Match & Hedgelaying Competition
	8 th	Coppicing – Wadhurst
	15 th	Training Day 1 – Laughton
Nov	19 th	Training Day 2 - Laughton
Dec	3 rd	Coppicing – Venue to be announced
	10 th	Training Day 3 – Venue to be announced
2012		
January	7 th	Coppicing – Venue to be announced
	14 th	Training Day – Contact Mike Parrott for more details – 01273 410292
February	25 th	Annual Competition – Contact Jim Vantassel – 01483 416210 for details

Committee:

President	John Blake Tel: 01444 482414
Chairman & Training Officer:	Gary Moore Tel: 01444 239961
Vice Chairman:	Dave Truran Tel: 01444 235447
Treasurer & Training Secretary:	Mike Parrott Tel: 01273 410292
Secretary	Phil Hart Tel: 0771 705 4172
Assistant Secretary & Newsletter Editor:	Rachel Howkins Tel: 01428 645899
Membership Secretary:	Dick Morley Tel: 01273 843633
Competition Secretary/Awards Officer:	Jim Vantassel Tel: 01483 416210
Transport Manager:	Bob Hunt Tel: 01273 400898
Show Officer & Caravan Manager:	Ron Moulard Tel: 01273 513597
Coppicing Officer (Non-Committee position):	Terry Standen Tel: 01580 892090

➤ ITEMS FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER TO RACHEL BY END OF OCTOBER PLEASE <

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the policy of the South of England Hedgelaying Society.

The Editor reserves the right to edit or exclude any item sent.

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