



**SOUTH OF ENGLAND HEDGE LAYING SOCIETY**  
Reg Charity No 1046124

**August 2014**



Ron Moulard – 1936–2014

## **RON MOULAND**

26<sup>TH</sup> February 1936 – 22<sup>ND</sup> June 2014

The flint walled downland village of Iford was the place where Ron lived and grew up as a child. Iford Hill and Front Hill and beyond them to the south and the west, Highdole Hill with its tumuli and Romano Settlements, the town of Lewis to the north and the river Ouse, the Brooks (part of the Ouse's flood plain) to the east.

As a child, Ron would have found many opportunities to explore and grow fond of and understand the country life. He learnt the craft of hedge-laying from his father, Fred, and both were ever present at local ploughing matches, local hedge-laying competitions and the National Championships. He was a founder member of the South of England Hedge-laying Society, a Committee Member and officer since its inception.

In the early years of the SEHLS, Committee Meetings would be held in Committee Member's homes. Whenever the meeting was at Ron's home, the Committee had an additional member, Ron's parrot, Percy. If things weren't going well, Percy would set about voicing his opinion and would have to be pacified with some fruit and nuts (that is after his opinion had been mooted)!

Holding the office of Shows and Caravans Officer, Ron would tow the Society's show and training day caravans all over the south-east of England. He was always present at SEHLS coppicing and training days, passing on his experience and knowledge to others who would go on to become champion cutters in their own right. These included his son. Ron was quietly very competitive and won many competition place cards and trophies. He judged occasionally but much preferred to cut. SEHLS honoured him with Life Membership and later with the office of President, a position he held at the time of his passing.

He spoke with proudness and excitement many times of his invitation to the NHLS Patron's Competition at Tetbury and meeting with a fellow hedge-layer, HRH, The Prince of Wales.

At Ron's Service of Thanksgiving at Iford Church the family tribute read by the Minister expressed his generosity and his love for life and also of his hospitality. When his family had flown the nest, Ron and Maureen took in students many becoming lifelong friends and with whom they exchanged many return visits. The Minister read on with the tales of Ron as a youngster, being a 'bit of a lad' and how he had had a near miss when siphoning fuel from a tank in the village that may or may not have been his own! While waiting for the fuel to transfer, Ron decided to light a cigarette, there was a bit of a boom and a bang but nobody in Iford said anything and Iford went about its business as usual.

Ron worked for some time at Shoreham docks overseeing the unloading of many barrels of Harvey's Bristol Cream. There was no half full or half empty for Ron Mouland

Ron served his National Service with the Royal Sussex Regiment and spent much of this time in Korea. He trained as a mechanic which in turn led to his love of Fordson tractors one of which purred sweetly in his funeral cortège.

Ron will be greatly missed. Those who knew him must feel honoured to have known a man of great endeavor. We gathered at St. Nicholas Church, which like Ron's life, was full and overflowing, to say Cheerio. Missed but not forgotten.

Phil Strugnell

## MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear Members,

I thank you all for giving our President, Ron Moulard, such a good send-off. To all who came to the barbecue and to all who came to the funeral, thank you.

To me Ron was the sort of man who, if you had broken down in your car somewhere, you could give him a call and he would come to help. If you needed some advice on a pleacher, he would tell you what to do. Nothing was too much trouble for him.

Actions always speak louder than words and the turn-out of family and friends says it all. He will be greatly missed, but I will only shut my eyes for a moment and a smile will appear as I think of the good times we had, so farewell old friend. Rest in peace.

Gary

## SCYTHING COMPETITION, WAKEHURST PLACE

There were nine of us hedge-layers on the Saturday and eight on the Sunday. The weather was hot and sticky but we had two great days of banter, scything and cider and in Frank's case, cider, scything and more cider. Some of the Wakehurst staff and friends took part plus two from the Scythe Association on Saturday.

Results:

Saturday, Individual Open Class: 1<sup>st</sup> G Moore, 2<sup>nd</sup> T Standen.

Sunday, Team Open: 1<sup>st</sup> G Moore, M Moore, T Standen. 2<sup>nd</sup> Scything Association Team

Ian from Wakehurst has asked me to thank you all. We are now looking forward very much to the John French Scything Challenge.

Gary

## URGENT HELP

**The Society is considering some alterations to the Constitution and changing our status to an Incorporated Charity. Do we have in our membership a practicing or retired solicitor who could give some advice on these changes. If so please contact Jim Vantassel, 01428-645899/07769 219196.**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### DOWN AT THE CANAL

This is an interesting and positive article, focusing as it does on finding a style that can easily be taught to inexperienced volunteers. A challenging experience, but if the enthusiasm is there, go for it!

Volunteers tend to vary in numbers and individuals, from session to session, so Roger and Ian are to be commended for their efforts and commitment to innovate a sort of 'Canal' style. There are some thirty different styles in the UK, each one developed as the result of regional needs/requirements, just like this one.

However, if this system is being considered for adoption as a main-stream 'style' for competition purposes, there is a danger that it will become less accessible to volunteers, especially inexperienced ones.

Also, if this system does emerge as a 'style, in whatever form, perhaps consideration should be given to bringing it under the umbrella of the NHLS?

What about a specific 'Canal' style competition, entering teams of two or three? Make use of a length of canal-side hedge that needs laying and that is another section done! Keep the marking system simple and make it a family day out, culminating in a prize giving ceremony. Who knows? It might catch on Nationally!

Dick Foulger

Dear Ed,

As a Vice-President of the Society I have been asked to step into the huge void left by Ron Moulard our past President. This is a position I am pleased to accept as a temporary measure until the next AGM.

I hasten to say, it is a very humbling experience for me and one that will be difficult for me to fill due to the vast wealth of knowledge and experience Ron had. Over the years he brought so much more to the Society. His willingness to tow the caravans to shows and competitions, his wisdom, humour and calming effect on members will be sadly missed.

Jim Vantassel

### HEDGES

At the last Committee Meeting, Frank Wright kindly agreed to be the 'Hedge Officer'. This means he will co-ordinate visits to inspect hedges which have been offered and liaise with landowners and Society members as necessary. Frank cannot do this on his own and will need layers from around the SE area to help with visits and reporting back. Paperwork in advance will be issued to make life easier. If you are a competent hedge-layer who would be willing to inspect hedges in your area please contact Frank for more details - 01273 493309.



### AWARD OF HONOUR 2014

Congratulations to Founder Member and our former President, John Blake, who was presented with the Award of Honour by Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal.

The award which goes around seven counties in the South of England by the South of England Agricultural Society, is presented in Sussex once in seven years. The citation reads:

“The 2014 Award of Honour is made to John Blake for his contribution to promoting the traditional craft of hedge-laying, and for his work as Chairman of the National Hedge-laying Society.

His influence in introducing this vital conservation tool into Holland is noteworthy”.

John, very humbly, says “It is very pleasing that the award is for hedge-laying and it needs recording that I did not do this on my own. There have been and are many enthusiastic hedge-layers who joined me in promoting the craft and of course setting up the South of England Hedge-laying Society. I would love to mention them all but it would be invidious to do so. There is, however, one person whose ‘fault’ it was that my name was put forward, but no names no pack drill as the saying goes! Long live hedge-laying and the hedges.”

As a result of the charity work carried out by the Society we were able to send £1,605 to the Somerset Flood Appeal. Many thanks to all those who took part.

**SHARP TOOLS MAKE BETTER WORK!!**  
**TOOL SHARPENING – 30 AUGUST, PLUMPTON COLLEGE**  
**FOR MORE DETAILS RING GARY – 01273 841854**

## CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF!!

After Ron Mouland's funeral Dick Morley surprised quite a few of his friends by saying he was booked to abseil down The Grand Hotel on Brighton seafront to raise money for a charity. So this had to be checked out and reported suitably!

In the Brighton Argus newspaper the day before the start of this two-day event the headline shouted 'Sprightly Dick, 85, to abseil down The Grand for charity'.

So on Thursday 17th July 2014 a crowd of people were gathered in Cannon Place to watch the many volunteers do their 100ft abseil down the side wall of the iconic Grand Hotel. The charity advised that no experience was necessary as full instruction would be given on the day by a qualified team. It was a rather hot day and on the roof where there was little shelter it was even hotter – hence the title above suggested by Dick. About 11:00 yet another figure appeared at the edge and the crowd became restless when someone said it was Dick in the red T shirt. When that comment was queried it was backed up with "It is Dick, can't you see the sandals".

Dick said in his newspaper interview that he had never abseiled before. He had offered to do the abseil in his 'nature as intended suit' in order to increase the sponsorship which he hoped would be at least five hundred pounds for the Action for Children charity. However, he was advised against this lack of clothing as the webbing in the harness could cause some pain to parts of his anatomy. It might also have caused some fainting in the crowd!

Dick was relaxed and smiling all the way down, but his face turned to nearly a scowl when he took on the far more hazardous task of crossing the busy three lane road to reach his wife, Jean, who had been watching. Later Dick admitted that he was perfectly 'cool' until the adrenaline wore off as he walked with Jean to his car and his legs went a bit like jelly.

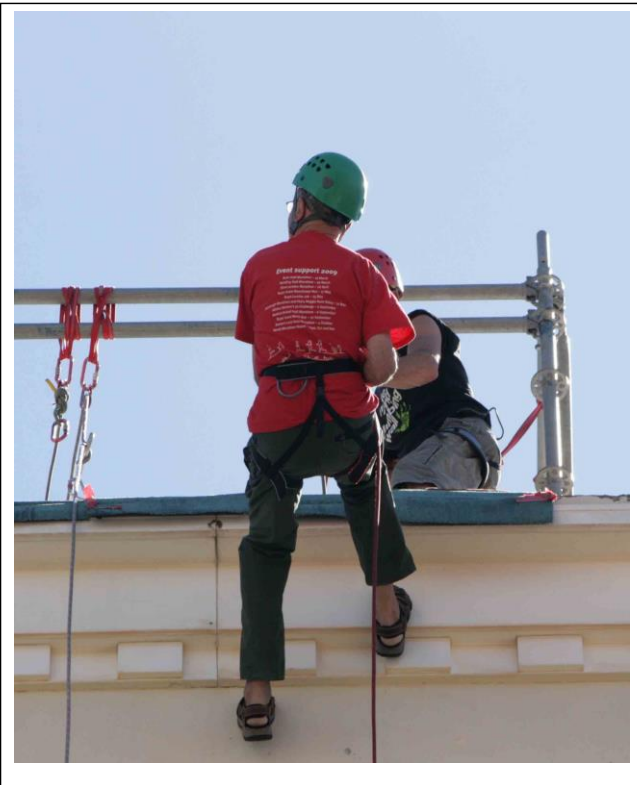
I suppose now, if Dick has got the bug, when any of his many friends ring to ask if they can visit, they may have to fit the visit in between abseiling down cliffs!

If you would like to donate, visit [virginmoneygiving.com/dickmorley](http://virginmoneygiving.com/dickmorley) or send a cheque to Jean Morley at Dorset Gardens Methodist Church, Brighton, BN2 1RL. For further details visit [www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk).

Roger Ferrand

PS. An interesting fact which came from the newspaper article was that the former Longhill School Headmaster was affectionately known as Mole to his ex-pupils. I never noticed this trait when Dick went hedge-laying!





## Nature Notes Summer 2014

### Four thousand records and counting...

Each year without fail we are delighted to see the first migrant birds that spend the summer months with us, return, and some species are so welcome that we might phone a friend to report their arrival. One species, because it is so associated with homes and buildings, is the House Martin and the first sighting of one of these is worthy of excitement.

Early birds are most likely to be the experienced adults returning to the site where they had successfully bred before and this “site fidelity” is one of the fascinations of migration. All returning migrants do not arrive together but do so up to a period of over a month. This is another wonder of nature because, if all set off together and encountered adverse weather conditions, the population would be decimated. Staggered migration lessens the risk and many will arrive as late as early June when those arriving first will be feeding their young.

We started our Constant Effort Site study in Brock’s Wood but didn’t catch as many birds as we had hoped but as usual made a number of interesting records. A Blackcap ringed as an adult male in 2011 was recaptured this year, as he had been a year later, in the same territory. Recoveries of this species ringed here in summer that we have received from their winter areas, have come from either side of the Mediterranean, from Southern Spain, Morocco and Algeria. Though not trans-Saharan, for travellers to navigate back to the same place in Brock’s is impressive, I think.

We also recaptured a male Blackbird that was ringed in its second year in 2009 and will be looking out for a female that we have recorded each year since ringing her as a nestling in 2007.



During our Bluebell Walk for the Hospice we heard what was for many of us, the first Cuckoo of the year. This and the Nightingale are the songs well known but to see either can be difficult.

I have started ringing the nestling Great and Blue Tits in the boxes three weeks earlier than last year so they will have longer to gain strength and body weight before the winter takes its toll of those in poor condition.

As we grow older, and I certainly am, some of the simple things in the countryside give the greatest pleasure. Recently, I was lucky to see, basking on a piece of flat board, half a dozen Common Lizards and beneath it several immature Slow Worms. These are of course also lizards. I found that to be wonderful as we are so frequently told how little wildlife there is to be found nowadays. By standing quietly they remained in view for some time. There is plenty to see when we have time and patience.

It is in July that some of the most interesting butterflies are on the wing so look out particularly in mature woodland for White Admirals and Silver Washed Fritillaries. These are both quite large, well marked, and are to be found in sunnier glades especially in the morning but are quite likely to visit large gardens where there are flowering shrubs. Another is the Marbled White found usually over rank grassland in colonies.

I am always astounded that, when the migrant birds arrive to breed how quickly they pair up, make a nest, lay their eggs and rear their young. The usual routine is that small birds lay an egg each day, usually in the morning, and do not incubate until the clutch is complete thus hatching together. Of course not all nests are successful. Predation by Magpies, Jays, Grey Squirrels and Crows etc. is part of the balance of nature and accounts for about half the nests started and with adverse weather a few more are lost but the strong breeders very soon make another attempt after losing either eggs or chicks. Birds that are rare or shy breeders do not recover in the same way and subsequently become even scarcer. The outcome, successful or otherwise, of each nest must be recorded to give a complete summary of each year's effort where the scientists co-ordinating the study can estimate the results assessing them against weather conditions as they vary from year to year and region of the country.

I have recorded nests since 1965 and according to the British Trust for Ornithology, who have just published the results of the first seventy-five years of the study, I have submitted over four thousand nest records in that time and stand thirty-seventh in their league table. I get a great deal of satisfaction from recording nests. This must be done in such a way that the parent birds are not disturbed and a great deal of scientific knowledge has been processed over the years.

Can there ever have been two such different seasons and weather conditions as those we have experienced of late? Think back to the bitter cold of April 2013 and how late the activities in the gardens and on the farms were. All successful work in the countryside depends upon being timely in carrying out operations such as soil preparation, seed sowing, application of fertiliser, mowing etc.





It is not only crops but livestock that are effected by the seasonal changes. Young lambs born in March and April thrive if there is a good supply of early grass as the ewes produce more milk. Early turn out of dairy cows means a flush of milk and the saving of conserved food. Last year the first cut of grass for silage could not be taken here until early June and the subsequent re-growth late and of low volume. This year the first cut was made during the second week of May and a further one in the third week of June so conserved food for next winter looks good and a third harvest of the grass will be made later. One thing that could not have been foreseen was that, immediately after the second cut was made and the fertiliser applied, we had half an inch of rain to wash it in. It is not often appreciated how important grass is as a crop. Livestock can graze it during the six months it grows but for the other six months they must receive a nutritious balanced diet of conserved grass as hay or silage to fulfil the production the Nation requires as milk or meat.

Barn Owls are marvellous birds and always a treat to see. After the late spring of 2013 we found none had bred in any of the nest boxes we check and this was widespread across the country. The reason was that, after the late cold weather, the birds were of such low body weight that they did not breed in order to protect the females from over doing it which would result in the danger of not surviving. It was assumed that the total population of Barn Owls was very low at that time. This year, however, is different. After the mild winter the population of small rodents is now huge. I expect most of us have seen voles and wood mice running across the garden path from one patch of vegetation to another. This rise and fall of the rodents occurs in cycles of four or five years and their predators respond accordingly.



So far five broods in our boxes have produced twenty-two well grown young. So, where have all these parent birds come from when they were supposed to be so scarce? Unless Barn Owls are feeding young, they have no need to appear before dark as they can catch enough for their own needs in the dark. Being such a secretive species they are therefore seldom seen. Three of the adult owls were wearing rings from other ringers and we are waiting to hear how far they have come. They do not usually travel more than ten miles from where they were hatched. By moving this distance it reduces the chances of in-breeding.

Our largest brood was of six and many of the boxes contained a larder of dead voles so there was no need for the larger owlets to eat any of their younger siblings to survive. My favourite nest was in a stack of large straw bales. The nest was in a gap between the bales that no one knew was there until a bale was removed and the birds revealed. The stack was restored and no harm done. They have now fledged and at dusk make a wonderful sight flying around the stack awaiting food from the adults. Shortly they will be able to hunt for themselves and disperse. It is anticipated that some pairs may have second broods this year.

I think the moral of this story is how resilient wildlife is and, if given a chance to restore the level of population the food supply can support, we need not wring our hands in despair unnecessarily.

**Reg Lanaway**

**ITEMS FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER TO RACHEL BY MID- NOVEMBER PLEASE.**

## HEDGE RAMBLINGS

It's what we call the close season for hedge-laying, or is it?

We may not be laying but if we did the job properly during 'the Season' the hedges we laid will now be in full growth with plenty of leaf and wildlife in abundance – birds who will have nested and brought up young that will have flown the nest or in the case of latecomers, will be ready to fly. Some will return again next year when the hedge will have another year's growth giving them more comfort. Other wildlife such as field mice, voles and hedgehogs will also be benefiting from our hard work. Then there is the livestock that will be contained in the fields surrounded by the hedges that have been laid.

We should give ourselves a pat on the back and raise a glass or a cup or two to praise our efforts many of which were carried out in difficult weather conditions.

Bill Hook



Hedgesparrow

presents the

# Hampshire Hedgelaying Championships

Sunday 19th October 2014

9:00am - 5:00pm

In support of

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Open Novice and Team Event  
Midland/South of England Classes  
Countryside and trade stands

Venue:

Hattingley Barn

Hattingley Road, Medstead, Alton GU34 5NQ

By kind permission of Mr Simon Robison

Entry:

General Public - £2

Children - Free

Email Chris Sparkes at [hedgesparrow54@yahoo.com](mailto:hedgesparrow54@yahoo.com) for entry forms

Entrys close Wednesday 1st October 2014



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|---------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>August</b>       | 30 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>Tool sharpening, Plumpton College</b>                                |
| <b>September</b>    | 6 <sup>th</sup>                    | <b>Laughton Ploughing Match Hedge-laying Competition.</b>               |
|                     | 17 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>Laughton Ploughing Match and Agricultural Show</b>                   |
|                     | 20 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>West Grinstead Ploughing Match Hedge-laying Competition</b>          |
|                     | 25 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>Committee Meeting, Ardingly Inn</b>                                  |
|                     | 26 <sup>th</sup> -28 <sup>th</sup> | <b>Weald Woodfair</b>   |
|                     | 27 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>Coppicing, venue to be confirmed</b>                                 |
| <b>October</b>      | 4 <sup>th</sup>                    | <b>Hurstpierpoint Ploughing Match Hedge-laying Competition</b>          |
|                     | 4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup>   | <b>South of England Autumn Show &amp; Game Fair</b>                     |
|                     | 18 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Training Day, venue to be confirmed</b>               |
|                     | 25 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>National Hedge-laying Society Competition, Lincolnshire NG32 2FQ</b> |
| <b>November</b>     | 15 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Training Day, venue to be confirmed</b>               |
|                     | 20 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>Committee Meeting, Ardingly Inn</b>                                  |
|                     | 29 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>Coppicing, venue to be confirmed</b>                                 |
| <b>December</b>     | 13 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Training Day, venue to be confirmed</b>               |
| <b>2015 January</b> | 3 <sup>rd</sup>                    | <b>Coppicing, venue to be confirmed</b>                                 |
|                     | 10 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>Improvers Day, Venue to be confirmed</b>                             |
|                     | 15 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>Committee Meeting, Ardingly Inn</b>                                  |
|                     | 24 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>President v Chairman Comp</b>  |
| <b>February</b>     | 7 <sup>th</sup>                    | <b>SEHLS Annual Competition</b>   |
|                     | 13 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>Annual General Meeting, Plumpton College</b>                         |
| <b>March</b>        | 14 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>Charity Hedgelaying day</b>  |
|                     | 19 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>Committee Meeting, Ardingly Inn</b>                                  |

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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|   |                                     |
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| Vice Chairman:  | Dave Truran<br>Tel: 01444 235447    |
| Treasurer & Training Secretary:                       | Mike Parrott<br>Tel: 01273 410292   |
| Secretary   | Phil Hart<br>Tel: 0771 705 4172     |
| Assistant Secretary & Newsletter Editor:              | Rachel Howkins<br>Tel: 01428 645899 |
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| Awards Officer:                                       | Jim Vantassel<br>Tel: 07769 219196  |
| Transport Manager:                                    | Bob Hunt<br>Tel: 01273 400898       |
| Show Officer & Caravan Manager:                       | Vacant<br>Tel: 01273 513597         |
| Coppicing Officer                                     | Tim Hughes<br>Tel: 01444 892742     |
| Assistant Coppicing Officer (Non-Committee position): | Terry Standen<br>Tel: 01580 892090  |
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