

SOUTH OF ENGLAND HEDGE LAYING SOCIETY

Reg Charity No 1046124

August 2015



Mike Bentley wins again; this time at Hattingley Barn, Hampshire.

Message from the Chairman

With the summer season well under way, thoughts of the committee have been with setting up the venues for the training days & competitions. These are nearly all set up now, many thanks to the team of committee members including Frank Wright who has done a lot of travelling visiting & inspecting the sites.

The Society has attended 3 new venues this summer season, thank you to the members that have organised & staffed these, towed the van and cut brush for the demonstration hedges. The new venues have been the Wild Wood event & Scything & Cider event at Wakehurst Place. The Wood show at the Weald & Downland Museum. Thank you to everyone that has taken part.

We have the tool sharpening course coming up on the 29th August, please book in with Phill Piddell.

I look forward to seeing you at the various events as we go through the season.

Kind regards, **Phil Hart.**

Message from the Editor

Unfortunately, due to technical hitch, for which I take full responsibility, the report on the 14/15 annual competition got missed out of the hardcopy April newsletter. It is reproduced here along with loads of other good stuff.

I can't be the only one to be curious about the early history of the society. There is a little information on the website but it is very sparse. Is there anyone who can put some flesh on this information, both for the website and for this newsletter? The sort of questions I'm thinking about are: where and when was the first training day, how many turned up? Who did the training? Ditto the first competition- does anyone remember the hedge? Can it be seen today?

Was any administrative assistance received from other societies or the National Society (if it existed). When did the first lady hedge layer appear? etc etc. Also are there any photographs or early literature available.

Info to me by email or at
Windrush, Cuilfail, Lewes, BN7 2BE
Ian Runcie



President vs Chairman comp and the fun day will both be followed by a Lamb BBQ (It's Ed Lovejoy's place - one of Phil Harts old students. Nice local organic Lamb, yummy)

Phill P.



A new season, time to hone your skills!

While you sharpen your tools ready for a new season for hedge laying it's time to think about getting some practice in before the competitions begin!

As always we will set aside sections of hedge on the training days for trained members, but please ensure you pre-book. Just drop me a note of the event(s) you wish to attend (Ideally by email) and I will send you a map.

Phill Piddell



Trainers wanted

Are you willing to help the Society train the next generation of hedge layers? We are looking for volunteers who can come along to the training days and pass on your skills? If you can help with one event per season it would make a big difference.

Please let Phill Piddell know which event(s) you can help with.



One day Chainsaw update course,

£107 per person. Please contact Sarah Firrell, Bespoke Training Organiser at Plumpton College. 01273 892014. Each course needs 4 people, so get together with your mates & fellow hedge layers.

NOTICES

Save the SOEHS Money

We would like to encourage members to receive this newsletter by e mail, please let Phil Piddell know if you would prefer this:

phil.piddell@bt.com



Hedge Laying Grants.

With DEFRA & Natural England getting the finer details out of the “New” Countryside Stewardship Scheme (not to be confused with the old Countryside Stewardship Scheme). There is money available for farmers who are in the scheme, to claim £ 9.40 for hedge laying: form BN5 and £3.40 for adding stakes & binding: form BN10. Other money is available for other hedge related work.

Visit the Natural England Website for full details and conditions.

Phil Hart



Training Young People

As a society we are very keen to promote the craft of hedge laying to the next generation.

Laying hedges can be hazardous and working on hedges with sharp tools requires a degree of maturity, and some young people are competent at a much younger ages than others.

After a lot of discussion amongst the committee we have agreed the following conditions.

The minimum age we will accept for training, or to enter a competition is 14.

The young person must be accompanied by parent / guardian at all times. This person is fully responsible for the care and welfare of the minor and must be a paid up member of the society. Training young people will remain totally at the discretion of the training officer, who's decision is final. Training is half price (membership is free to under 16's anyway). If the parent/guardian is not being trained they only need to be a fully paid up member of the society. Providing all the above criteria are met the SEHLS Insurance will apply.

Under 16’s wishing to enter a competition are only eligible to enter the pairs class, and must enter with a parent/guardian as the other member of the team. This person is fully responsible for the care and welfare of the minor.

Phill Piddell

Chainsaws - new rules

Used correctly, chainsaws and allied cutting equipment are very versatile tools with a variety of uses. But they are also potentially very dangerous.

Serious accidents can and do occur without proper training, or because operators have not kept their skills up to scratch.

By law, chainsaw operators must have received adequate training relevant to the type of work they undertake. They are also required to wear appropriate chainsaw protective clothing whenever they use a chainsaw.

Chainsaw usage has been discussed at a recent committee meeting and to ensure everyone within the society works in a safe manner the following mandatory requirements have been agreed.



If you wish to use a chainsaw at any SEHLS event in the future (including competitions, training, coppicing etc.) you need to:

- Have successfully completed chainsaw training with an approved provider (e.g. NPTC or LANTRA), your training must be up-to-date.
- Send details of your certification (or send a copy) to Phill Piddell (email or post acceptable). It is not acceptable to "register on the day" or "do it next time".
- Your saw must be in good working order with all safety features working.
- When using your saw you must work in a safe way and use all appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).

Anyone not complying with the above will not be allowed to use a chainsaw at an SEHLS event.

Phill Piddell phill.piddell@bt.com

1 Hope House Farm Cottage, Crouch Lane, Sandhurst,
CRANBROOK, Kent, TN18 5PD

NOTICES

Fags Booze and dead wood. How it was

Here's a video of the 1963 championship

https://youtu.be/wbqZ_VV5SVY

suggested by Roger Taylor
and an old picture found by Dave Truran in a junk shop.



Training Opportunity

The society has been approached by an organisation which wishes to run hedge laying training courses. They have asked if any of our members would be interested in running the courses. The organisation is looking for a competent hedge layer who has the ability to train others. There is a tutor's fee on offer and the first course is on November 14th 2015.

Should you be interested please send your details to the SEHLS secretary Chris Burchell Collins via email;-

thesouthofenglandhedgelayers@googlemail.com or call him on 01273 495026. The deadline is 25th October 2015.

NOTICES

Ploughing Matches

Do you want to put your hedge-laying skills to the test? Maybe it's time to enter a ploughing match? Not with a tractor, but by entering their hedge-laying competition! Be warned that these are not for the fainthearted.



Points Trophy

If you plan to enter the four competitions listed below you might as well enter the points trophy! Simply give Gary Moore £10 at the start of the season. The entry money is divided between the top three places. Next seasons events



Event	Competition Location	Date	Contact for entry
Laughton Ploughing match	Northeast Farm, Northeast, Nr Iford, Lewes, East Sussex. BN7 3EX	5th September	Des Whittington 01825 890357
West Grinstead Ploughing match	Upper Chancton Farm London Road, Washington. RH20 3DH	19th September	Chris Passmore Applesham Farm, Coombes, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 0RP 01273 452016
Hurstpierpoint Ploughing match	Truslers Hill Farm, Blackstone Lane, Nr Henfield. West Sussex. BN5 9TA	3rd October	Gary Moore 01273 841854
SEHLS Annual competition	Scotney Castle, National Trust, Lamberhurst Kent. TN8 3JN	21st February 2016	Phill Piddell phill.piddell@bt.com 01580 850768

Summer Shows – Wakehurst Place – event review

This bank holiday weekend I helped out with the SEHLS stand at the Wakehurst Place show. If you have not yet supported the society at a show I can highly recommend giving it a try!

Unusually this show was set in the woods (in the same place that we coppice) with the public following a circular trail and every 20 or so

meters coming across a different woodland craft. There were hurdle makers, lots of green woodworkers, a charcoal burner, a Sussex Trug maker, and us.

Before I got to site Tim Hughes and David Crouch had laid a demonstration



section of hedge which Wakehurst plan to keep as a permanent attraction. As each group of visitors arrived we talked to them about hedgelaying and showed them the principles of the craft. We informed a lot of people who now have a much greater understanding of hedges and their impact in the environment, and we also signed up a few new members.

Wakehurst Place were also very generous and gave us cash donation for the society.

All in all a very nice day supporting the society, talking to people about hedge laying.

What we do need is more volunteers to help out, so please contact David Crouch. 01323 811557

david-crouch@hotmail.co.uk

There is a list of summer shows below or on-line at www.sehls.co.uk

Phill Piddell

Caption Competition



Suggestions to Phil Hart please.

And another photo from the Netherlands showing the Dutch style.



RE Albanian 'Hedgelaying' and Old Pleachers:

Letter from Georg Müller, editor of 'Europe's Field Boundaries'

"Jef Gielen kindly sent me the latest news (April 2015) from the South of England Hedge Laying Society. I'm delighted that my hedge-friends of the Society are keen to bring my book to the attention of their members. The book was in part a thank you for the wonderful hospitality of the South of England Hedge Laying Society at the hedge laying competition. But it should also be a source of information and an opportunity for searching questions.

In the latest issue there are two issues about which I would make some comment.



To the question on page eight from Ian Runcie, I would suggest that the layered trees are around two hundred years old, or maybe even more. It is a matter of the type and thickness of the tree. In my book, I have several illustrations of such old trees.

Then on the question on page ten, "Does anyone know anything about Albanian Hedgelaying?" I would say that it is not a picture of a quickset hedge or a living hedge but rather a

dead hedge or a woven fence. The fence illustrated would only have been created from dead wood. Such fences are not uncommon in Albania. In my book I have illustrated and described such fences, in the 'Europe' chapter (pages 90-91 and figure 204) and the 'Albania' chapter (pages 249-250). On the first page of my attached flyer there is a picture of a similar woven fence.

Just for general information, there is actually no hedge laying as you understand it in Great Britain in Albania; there is only weaving of fencing.



I would be pleased to receive further news from you. I also attach an overview of my photographs and if anyone wants to see any of them specifically, please contact me.

Best Wishes."

Georg Müller

Translated from German by Geoff Sambrook

FOR YOUR DIARY

Events and Shows

Date	Event	Address	Post Code
18th, 19th & 20th. Sept	*Weald Wood Fair Bentley Wildfowl Trust	Bentley, Halland, East Sussex,	BN8 5AF
Saturday 5 th Sept	Laughton Ploughing Match Hedge Laying Competition. Saturday	Northeast Farm, Northeast, Nr Iford, Lewes, East Sussex	BN7 3EX
Wed. 16 th Sept	Laughton Ploughing Match Ploughing & Agricultural Competition. Wednesday	Mays Farm, Selmeston	BN26 6TS
19 th Sept	West Grinstead Ploughing Match Hedge Laying Competition & Agricultural Show.	Upper Chancton Farm London Road, Washington	RH20 3DH
3rd Oct	Hurstpierpoint Ploughing Match Hedge Laying Competition & Agricultural Show.	Truslers Hill Farm, Blackstone Lane, Nr Henfield. West Sussex.	BN5 9TA
9 th Oct	Durham Hedge Laying Championship	Near Durham, North East England	
10 th Oct	Scottish Hedge Laying Championship	Near Jedburgh, Scotland	
11 th Oct	Hampshire hedgelaying Championship	Hattingley Valley Vinard	
11 th Oct	North East Hedge Laying Championship	Northumberland, North East England	
24 th Oct	National Hedge Laying Society Hedge Laying Competition, Bristol.	Woodford lodge, Stoke Hill, Chew Stoke, Bristol, Avon.	BS40 8XH
9 th Jan 2016	SEHLS Improvers Day Competition	To be confirmed (TBC)	TBC
21 st Feb 2016	SEHLS Annual Competition	Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst. TBC	TBC
23 rd Jan 2016	President vs Chairman competition	Wittersham, Kent	TN 30
26 th Feb 2016	SEHLS AGM	Business Centre, Plumpton College, Ditchling Road, Plumpton, Lewes	BN7 3AE

* The SOEHS caravan will be at these events

Anyone interested in helping out at any of the shows for a free entry ticket (limited number available), please contact David Crouch. 01323 811557

FOR YOUR DIARY

Training Fee for Hedge Laying is £150 for four training days, or £60 for one “taster” day. You also need to be a member of the society for insurance purposes. All training must be pre-booked.

The following training days for Coppicing & Hedge Laying are planned.

	Subject	Date	Location	Cost
	Tool Sharpening	29 August 2015	Plumpton College	£10
	Coppicing	26 September 2015	Wakehurst Place	£150 for all four days
Day 1	Hedge Laying	17 October 2015	Alton, Hampshire	
Day 2	Hedge Laying	14 November 2015	Alton, Hampshire	£60 for one day
	Coppicing	28 November 2015	Wakehurst Place	
Day 3	Hedge Laying	12 December 2015	Lamberhurst, Kent	
	Coppicing	2 January 2016	Benenden, Kent	
Day 4	Hedge Laying Improvers Day	9 January 2016	Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst, Kent	

Note that dates and locations may be subject to change

Coppicing days are FREE to all Members

Experienced current members

A section of hedge will be allocated for experienced current members wishing to lay hedge, please contact Phill Piddell book your place.

Other events

- [The ‘Presidents verses Chairman’ Competition will be at Wittersham, Kent 23rd January 2016
- [Our Annual Competition is on the 21st February 2015 (Location to be confirmed).
- [The South of England Hedge Laying Fun Day will be at Wittersham, Kent 19th March 2016.

More details for all events will be published nearer the time.

Please note 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 events.

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

The Membership Secretary, Phill Piddell.

1 Hope House Farm Cottage, Crouch Lane, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, TN18 5PD

01580 850768 phill.piddell@bt.com

Form on Next Page:

South of England Hedge-Laying Society



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (or RENEWAL) April 2015 to March 2016

PRESIDENT:

Peter Tunks
The Coach House
Waltersville Way
Horley
RH6 9EP

Tel: 01293 784826 / 07836 757570

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: _____

Tel: _____ Mobile: _____

Emergency Contact (Name and Number) _____

Email: _____

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.

After 2 date changes due to unforeseen clashes with HRH's annual competition I did wonder if anyone would turn up to our event but, in the end, we had a record turnout. A number of members made a weekend of it and attended both events.

What a glorious site! It is hard to imagine somewhere so quiet in the southeast of England, and with such an "easy" hedge we had no need of chainsaws. Unlike last year the weather was nice and sunny until the end of the event, then it came down by the bucket.

With 35 competitors cutting over 300 yards of hedge our three judges and chief steward were kept busy throughout the day. Due to the straightforward hedge and very high quality laying by everyone, they had their work cut out with the marking.



Judgment Day

Happily everyone completed their section and we had no need to return after lunch (in the rain) to finish off.

The entries were pretty evenly split between classes, with 8 in both Novice and Champion, 9 in Senior, and 10 Veterans.

Some changes to the rules meant that the Champion class was limited to 8 entries, with the last placed entry swapping places with the winner of the Senior class the following year. So well done to Nigel on his promotion, and commiserations to Sarah who now has to battle her way back up to the champion class.



Bentley gets his reward

We had a few visitors, mainly from the estate itself, who were impressed by the workmanship, and very supportive of the craft. Hopefully next year at Scotney we can attract lots more visitors, and maybe pick up some new members. We will be looking for help from non-laying members to talk to the public (nothing tricky, just hand out some leaflets and answer questions about hedge-laying and the competition).

31st Annual Competition

Thanks must of course go to: the Judges and chief steward, Pat for scorekeeping, Paul for cutting 100's of binders and sharpened stakes, the Estate team for allowing us to use their venue to Lady Mary presenting the prizes, to the refreshment team (Luz- Marina, Pat and Mike) and to Fiona for taking some pictures of you all.

Another change is coming next year – in order to speed up the start of the event the committee have agreed that we will not hold a “draw for a cant” – your cant will be allocated based on the order you apply to enter the competition (in your class). So the early birds catch the low numbers (which might be an advantage, or might not



May 15

The warm weather during the week after Easter has brought Spring in with a rush. The woodland flowers, always so welcome are at their best before the canopy of leaves obscures the light from the ground. Before Bluebells the Wood Anemones and Celandines make a beautiful carpet on the woodland floor.

One of the most frequently seen and easily recognised bird must be the Blackbird, commonly found in all habitats and regularly in gardens where it often breeds. Of all birds' nests this is the one most people will have seen as they are constructed in a great variety of sites, in bushes, creepers, outhouses and even on the ground at the base of a tree or wall. The nest is a well-built structure of anything available including grass, moss, string or even



pieces of plastic plastered together with mud and lined with hay. Theirs is a long breeding season with the mature birds starting early in March but in towns where there is artificial lighting, confusing the birds, even earlier. There have been reports of a pair close to the Royal Pavilion in Brighton that regularly has eggs in January. Whether any young fledge successfully at such an early date is unknown.

The eggs have a greenish background colour variably speckled with brown or grey freckles. As with most passerines, smaller perching birds, one egg is laid daily until the clutch is complete with incubation starting with the final egg. This ensures that all the young are of the same development. They are fed almost entirely on Earthworms that are available over a long period. Over many years I have submitted Nest Records to the British Trust for Ornithology and the findings across several hundred Blackbird nests are interesting. The season is from March till July with many birds having three attempts at rearing a brood during this period. We have found that only about a third of nests actually produce young, predation by Magpies, Crows etc. or by Grey Squirrels or Brown Rats being the main cause of failure.

Though reference books show clutch size of eggs as three to six and four is quite common I have found that this varies across the season and for obvious reasons. In March three eggs are usual as at this time of year the ground has yet to warm up so worms are deeper and more difficult to find. Second broods in May are where five eggs are more likely. I have only ever seen one of six. The ground is now warmer and worms more easily found. Indeed if you watch a Blackbird collecting worms for its nestlings, by the size of the beak-full you can estimate the age of the young. Until they are about a week old they select smaller worms and soften them up to. A huge mouthful shows that they are nearer fledging. The nestlings leave the nest at about a fortnight old. Come July, any late broods often revert to three eggs, the ground getting firmer and the females having used much energy over the season.

There is much to see right under our noses without having to go far and this close study and recording of even familiar species can be of great interest and value.

June '15

Back in 1982 here at Plumpton College an Ecological Survey was carried out so that a benchmark could be set to record the status of much of the wildlife over the whole estate and comparisons made regarding any changes due to agricultural practices. A follow-up was carried out twenty years later and many of these changes followed national trends. All aspects of wildlife were covered. I assisted by recording the breeding birds over one of eight sections on the map. Other areas were covered by experienced birders so hopefully the results were consistent over both surveys.

Species that have declined during this time were Willow Warbler that in the first study held fifty-two territories but in the second only a dozen. Yellowhammers and Linnets until recent



years were common and nested in the hedges and low cover from Downs to the lower end of the farm. The habitat looks very much the same but they have certainly declined over the period. Probably, due to our garden feeding, Goldfinches are noticeably more common than years ago. Though still a delight to see, in those days they were really special and we recorded just five pairs. The lack of winter stubbles certainly has deprived other small seed eaters of vital food to enable them to get through the winter. Tree Sparrows in particular are seldom found in the South of

England apart from one colony at Dungeness. The game-cover crops have helped but there is always a period late in winter when the seeds run out before the natural food is there,

Lapwings that occasionally bred in spring-sown crops are hardly ever seen during the breeding season now. Spotted Flycatchers that used to occur in most reasonably sized gardens are now almost absent from this part of the country apart from perhaps a returning migrant in late summer. Swifts were once common in Sussex, breeding in many churches and old buildings. Now few are seen, though my son who lives in Shrewsbury, tells me they are very numerous there, breeding in the rooves of many of the old houses. Cuckoos and Turtle Doves are also very scarce.

On the plus side, Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs, birds of the woods and copses, have nationally and locally doubled in number. This year several new Rookeries have established locally. These birds require arable farming to provide the food they need. In 1982 Sparrow-hawks were so scarce they were on the Schedule 1 Protected list that prevented their disturbance at the nest. Now they are commonplace.

Who saw a Buzzard in East Sussex thirty years ago? Now most days they are over the area and breed locally. My particular pleasure is the number of Barn Owls seen locally due certainly to the positioning of well-constructed nest boxes and the establishment of the Stewardship Strips of tufted grass at the edge of field that gives ideal cover for Field Voles, their main prey species. Not one was recorded in the 1982 survey.

As they have no natural predators, Roe Deer have greatly increased their population and in places where very numerous a nuisance by damaging young trees or even venturing into gardens and feasting on vegetables and roses!

Aug'15

Bird Watch

We sometimes hear how birds breed in strange places that are either close to habitation or tolerant of the presence of humans. One such example is of a pair of Pied Wagtails in the stable yard near me where for weeks building work has been going on. The birds have been present and obviously holding territory but I had no idea where the nest site was until they started feeding young. The parent birds appeared carrying beakfuls of insects so by watching them back it was soon clear where they had nested. In a very busy part of the yard was a large yellow builders' bag containing chocks of wood that had been sawn off the ends of new rafters. They disappeared into amaze of small spaces between the blocks deep into the bag emerging without the food.

These birds would have selected the nest site, built the nest, laid probably five eggs one daily, incubated for twelve days and their brood fed for about a fortnight. By this time by the size of the food being collected, the young must have been about half-grown. From that it can be estimated that they will have been about the site over a month and looked set to succeed. Imagine my horror the very next morning on finding the yard being cleared for paving and the bag among others already on a truck.



Knowing the builders, I quickly told them of the situation and they attached shackles to the bag to return it but not to the exact same place as that was to be paved. The closest they could put it was about eight feet away. We had no way of knowing if the nestlings had been crushed by the movement of the timber in the bag so waited to see what would happen. The Wagtails had been close-by all the time and were anxiously watching all this as it occurred. Carrying food they both alighted on the place the bag used to be looking puzzled but the female within a minute had worked out the position of the nest and was into the bag and fed the young as if nothing had happened. The male took a bit longer but eventually got it right and a couple of days later within feet of the builders as they worked, are carrying on with their domestic responsibilities.

I am tempted to see if there is a way of moving some of the blocks so that I can ring the nestlings as it would be so interesting to record the life history of these birds we managed to save but the possibility of dislodging a block and damaging the young is more responsible. Later four young were seen leaving the bag as they successfully fledged

This is a good example of how certain species tolerate human presence. We usually keep away from nests so that the birds are not disturbed. From this we see that it is they that choose the nest sites and if it is the right one for them, regardless of human presence, that is where they will attempt to breed and often succeed.

July '15

The unusually wet weather in May and early June this year will have affected the breeding success of the species of bird that nest on or close to the ground in the long vegetation. Not only will the sodden plants endanger by chilling newly hatched nestlings but the emergence of insects for their food will also be delayed and the birds may fail. Fortunately there should be time for second broods as most species will lay repeat clutches after failure.

Certain birds will breed only once each year. Nightingales are ones that have just one attempt and they do so on the floor of a wood or copse, usually in a damp area. They are known to be long-lived despite the hazards of migrating to the Congo in Africa for the winter so a poor yield of young birds on a wet year can cause noticeable lowering of a population which may take several seasons to recover.

Swifts are the most amazing birds, spending almost their entire lives on the wing apart from the brief nesting time when they even collect feathers while in flight for lining their nests. Laying only two or three eggs and not maturing to breed for about three years, their turn-over is low as very few predators can catch them in flight so fast do they travel. The greatest danger for a Swift, having such long wings and short legs, is that it cannot lift itself from the ground should it be beaten down by heavy rain as sometimes happens.

I enjoy showing school children around the college farm. For those of Primary School age the topic is where food comes from before it gets to the supermarkets. The interest shown by the older pupils and the questions that they ask make it very rewarding. The younger ones do have difficulties understanding that the animals they see will either produce offspring that will become meat or become meat themselves. The production of milk is easier for them to understand and now they know it doesn't start off in plastic bottles! One of the things that they never realised is the importance of grass as a crop. I always point out that grass grows for only half the year whereas the animals need feeding for the whole year so much must be conserved as either silage or hay.

The sixth form students, studying Rural Science, see Health, Growth, Nutrition and Reproduction, all sciences, used daily by anyone concerned in growing crops or tending livestock. Technology used for the dairy cows is another angle not usually known to the wider public. Each one, valued on average £2000 carries a transponder on her foreleg. This identifies her in the milking parlour, records milk yield, controls feeding, monitors health, oestrus and bodyweight. This generally amazes these students who are mainly urban dwellers who assume that those working in the countryside are lesser mortals. The value of livestock, tractors and machinery is so great nowadays that the responsibility of handling them is only for very skilled workers. I point out that just because someone has mucky boots doesn't mean they have little between their ears!

Reg Lanaway

Committee and Officers:

President	Peter Tunks 01293 784826
Vice President. and National Rep, Assistant Training Chairman & Training Officer:	Gary Moore 01273841854
Vice Chairman	Phil Hart 0771 705 4172
Secretary	Dave Truran 01444 235447
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**Items for next Newsletter to Ian by mid
December please**

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wood Anemone, Flickr, Sofica

Goldfinch. Flickr, Colin H

Pied Wagtail, Flickr, Simon Kidner