

SOUTH OF ENGLAND HEDGE LAYING SOCIETY

Reg Charity No 1046124

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

December 2018



STRAIGHT AND NARROW

**Tim Radford won
the Nationals in the
SOE style**



FOR YOUR DIARY

Date	Event	Venue
29 th Dec 2018	Coppicing	Furze Field nr Turners Hill
5 th January 2019	Improvers Day (day 4)	Isfield, East Sussex
19 th Jan 2019	Coppicing	Furze Field
2 nd Feb 2019	President vs Chairman	Polegate
17 th February 2019	SEHLS Annual Competition	Angmering
16 th March 2019	Charity day	Seddlecombe
23 rd March 2019	Midland Day	Angmering

Dates and locations may be subject to change.

To receive booking information complete a membership application form.

Fees

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

1 taster day	£60
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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.

35th Annual Hedge Laying Competition

The Society is pleased to announce that the annual competition will be held at Angmering Park Estate, Lee Farm BN13 3XJ on Sunday Feb 17th 2019. The Hedge is about 2- 3 miles from the A280, and I am told is pretty straight forward.

As always competitors and officials get a meal, and this year we are at the Black Horse a short drive from the site.

If you wish to attend please complete the entry form and return it to me (email preferred, just give me your name and class, and any additional meal details). You must be a paid up member of the society by the 31st Jan 2018 to be eligible to enter this event.

Entries will close on the 3rd Feb, and no entries will be accepted after this date. Phill P
Classes and prizes

Class	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
Champion	The Society Cup +	£50	£25	£15
Senior	Westward Plaque +	£50	£25	£15
Novice	Westward Plaque +	£50	£25	£15
Novice Pairs	Society Plate +	£50	£25	£15
Veteran	The Society Trophy +	£50	£25	£15
Best 1 st Year re-growth	The Whittington Shield +	£25	£15	£10
Best Veteran re-growth	The Fred Mouland Memorial Trophy			£25
Best bindings (Novices only)	Presidents Prize - kindly donated by the Society President			£20
Most improved Novice	The Bill Truran Memorial Trophy			£25
Best work on a poor length	The Joan Streete Memorial Shield			£25
Best stake & binding	The Jim Vantassel Tankard			£25
Best work with hand tools - Novice				£50
Best work with hand tools - Novice Pairs				£50
Best work with hand tools - Veteran				£50
Best work with hand tools - Senior				£50
Best work with hand tools - Champion				£50

Classes

Class	Eligibility
1 Veteran A	For those aged 60 to 69 years of age on the competition date
2 Veteran B	For those aged 70 and over on the competition date
3 Senior	For those who have previously won 1 st prize in a novice class and experienced cutters who, having previously entered the Novice Class, and now wish to compete at a higher level
4 Champion	For those who are current members of the Champion Class or have previously won the Senior Class. You will only be eligible to enter this class if you have competed in the SEHLS annual competition within the last three years (i.e. if you have not competed for three years or more you must enter another class) Special note for the Champion class is for the elite layers, and is restricted to a Maximum of Eight entries allocated on a FIRST COME FIRST SERVED basis. Additionally the person in last place will not be eligible to enter this class the following year (they will swap places with the winner of the senior class)
5 Novice	Entrants for this class must have completed at least 4 training days in the past 3 years or have previously entered, at a similar level, and completed a recognised competition in the allocated time. The first prize winner from the previous year may not enter this class again.
6 Novice Pair	Entrants for this class must have completed at least 4 training days in the past 3 years or have previously entered, at a similar level, and completed a recognised competition in the allocated time. The first prize winners from the previous year may not enter this class again Name of person you wish to pair with (leave blank if you are willing to be "paired on the day")

Entry for the competition is **free to members** and includes lunch at a local hostelry details will be in your joining pack. A joining pack including a schedule, map and prize list will be posted/emailed on **13th February 2016**. Confirmation that your entry was received will be sent to members who have email

The Meal is free for competitors and competition officials. Everyone else is welcome to join us, the cost is £15 per meal, and must be paid in advance. Please include payment with your entry.

CONDITIONS

All competitors must be fully paid up members of the Society on 31st Jan 2018. All competition applications must be fully completed and acknowledged. Any exceptional circumstances or special conditions required by a competitor (e.g. assistance due to lack of mobility or injury) must be agreed by the Chief Steward prior to the start of the competition.

COMPETITION RULES

The draw will take place at the class sections at **08.15** and laying will commence at **08.30**. Rejection of the drawn cant will result in immediate disqualification and a penalty of suspension from the Society Competition in the following year.

Competitors not present at the draw will be allocated a cant by the section steward.

Time allowed: 5 Hours – any extra time will be at the discretion of the Competition Director and Chief Steward.

Competitors arriving later than 30 minutes from the start of the Competition will be allowed to start at the discretion of the Chief Steward.

Signals: An air horn will be used:

2 short blasts will indicate the draw for cants at 08.15.

1 long blast will indicate the start of the competition at 08.30.

1 short blast will be sounded 15 minutes before the end of the competition

2 long blasts will indicate the end of the competition.

Immediately following the final signal competitors will be expected to stand away from their work and no further work is to be undertaken. The Judge will then mark the cant according to the work that has been completed. Competitors who have not completed their cant will then return to complete it. Failure to do this will result in exclusion from the following year's competition. If in the opinion of the Steward or Judge the cant is not completed due to the competitor wasting time, the Judge will deduct 5 points from the competitor's score.

Failure to stand away from the hedge will result in that cant not being marked whether complete or not.

All competitors to cut and lay a stock proof hedge in the South of England style (definition on separate sheet) of not more than 10yds with a finished height of 4 feet to the top of the binders (Veterans and Novices typically 8yds).

All frith to be cleared to the side of the hedge indicated by the stewards with a minimum 1.5 YARDS separation from the hedge. Any competitor leaving frith within 1.5 yards is liable to DISQUALIFICATION. All cants to be left tidy.

Only those stakes and binders provided by the Society are to be used.

The Competition will be regulated by the Chief Steward in conjunction with the competition Director.

Competitors in the Novice Classes will not be allowed to use chainsaws. A chainsaw steward will be appointed. Competitors in other classes must provide and use the appropriate safety equipment and have their **Certificate details** registered with the society.

Previously agreed assistance shall be limited to non assessable activities.

The Judge's decision is final.

All Competitors agree to abide by the safety directions.

Depending on the number of entries, it may be necessary to cancel or amalgamate classes and adjust the prizes accordingly. No 3rd prize will be paid if there are only 4 entries

Vehicles may only be parked as directed.

COMPETITION ENTRY FORM 2018

Name		
Address		
Telephone		email

PLEASE INDICATE THE CLASS YOU WISH TO ENTER (**tick 1 box**)

Class	Tick
1 Veteran A	
2 Veteran B	
3 Senior	
4 Champion	
5 Novice	
6 Novice Pair	

Lunches: I wish to order ___ additional lunches £15.00 (enclose payment)

If you would like a vegetarian meal please advise.

I have read, understood and accept the competition conditions & rules

Signed: _____

Date:_____

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED FORM TO:

Phill Piddell. 1 Hope House Farm Cottage, Crouch Lane, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, KENT.

TN18 5PD. Or ideally email details to phill.piddell@bt.com

The Great All England Horse Ploughing Match, at Bushey Down Farm, Droxford in Hampshire October 21st 2018

Well third time lucky, after two aborted attempts to attend this show SEHLS finally made it. The original invitation goes back to when we attended the Wood Show at the Weald & Downland museum at Singleton in 2015.

With the offer of a live hedge to work on I thought it best to go and do a site visit. The hedge was just over 30 mtrs long, a nice size and good condition, containing a mix of hawthorn, hazel, field maple & dogwood. With a hard track all the way up to, the decision was made to attend early because, in previous years, the rain leading up to and on the day of the match had meant they were towing everyone on the field at the start.

Next step was to start the planning for the event and get some assistance with laying the hedge. There was also the matter of cutting the stakes and binders for the day; these were cut from the SEHLS site at Hurstpierpoint and Small Dole

The arrangements for the weekend were made, sorted out at the Bentley Wood Fair, and concluded in the Hare & Hounds pub in Cowfold after Training Day 1. The plan was for John, Frank and myself to do some hedge laying on the Saturday so that when the visitors turned up on Sunday, they could see what a finished hedge would look like. Unfortunately Frank's van decided to break down on route so it left John and me to lay the first section of hedge in the bright and warm October sunshine.

Our start was delayed as the farmer was having his first shoot of the season and the first drive was in the neighbouring field, so we were able to admire the surrounding countryside in the autumn sunshine which wasn't a hardship.

By late afternoon, John and I had a section of the hedge down, staked and bound, so we decided that it was a good time to leave. I was going back home while John was off to stay in his B & B

Sunday was an early start and the previous day's warmth meant that it was a foggy drive to the site; thankfully I was able to give Frank a lift, so we were back to full strength.

With the tables set up with all the paperwork and display material, and a welcome cuppa drunk, the hedge was divided up. John and I carried on from where we had left off on Saturday, Frank took the next cant the other side of the large tree in the middle, then Mike took the next one, and Gwyn & Hans the last one. The hedge was just over 30mtrs in length so none of the cants were too long, which was deliberate, so that we would have the time to talk to visitors and show them what we were doing.

My wife Jo was did a sterling job manning the table and explaining to the public what hedge laying was all about, I guess her knowledge must have been gleaned from listening to me go on about it. In between she was able to take some photos. This was handy, as it freed up Roger to help Gwyn and Hans with their section of hedge which was all hazel.

We had hardly got started and a couple of visiting hedge layers from Dorset turned up, it was good to see Russell & Mandy Woodman, and thanks for their help on the day.

With such lovely weather, the crowds turned up; our hedge was close to the main arena and catering wagons. This combined with quite a few announcements on the PA meant that most of the day there was a good crowd of people watching us working in the sun. The hedge itself wasn't too bad, in places a bit tangled up but the size and condition meant you could cut stuff out and still end up with a good size hedge.

By lunchtime most of the hedge was down and, after some refreshment, there was the staking and binding to do and tidying up; by mid-afternoon the hedge was finished.

The comments we received from the public were all positive, saying how nice it was see a real craft, what a work of art it was and what a good job we had done, and the organisers seemed happy so hopefully we will have an invite back for a future event. Chris Burchell-Collins



Thank you to John French, Frank Wright, MikeMason, Roger Ferrand, Gywn Alford, Jo Burchell Collins and Hans Taylor.



Event reports

Nationals

Great showing this year at the National hedgelaying competition (<http://www.hedgelaying.org.uk>)

18 cutters entered in SoE style, second only to Midland in terms of numbers.

A nice dry, COLD day, pretty consistent hedge for the most part, great food, what more could you want?

Well done to the NHLS team for putting on such an amazing event, really well organised

Thanks to our judges and stewards for looking after us

Also well done to everyone who won a prize. See the front page for the amazingly straight stake line from this year's Supreme Champion, Tim Radford, which EVERYONE was impressed with. He's not a member of the SOEHS but won in the SOE style.



Pictures <https://www.flickr.com/gp/23011838@N00/yqq0T3>



Graham West came 3rd in the Nationals SOE style and also looks pretty straight.

Event reports

Training Day 1 13/10/18



**Not so straight
but still
impressive**

We arrived at Bolney in the warm (really) morning for the first training day of the season, and were immediately impressed with

Franks first hedge of the season. We had a mix of plant species and most of the cants were perfect for the trainees, with some more interesting sections further down the field to entertain the more experienced cutters.

Phil sorted out the trainees with a trainer, and we set off.

There was not a huge amount of clearing out to be done, so we were able to launch in with the pleaching pretty quickly.

Everyone was progressing well but we realised that we were missing a vital component, the stakes and binders. Yes a communication breakdown. Many thanks to Phil, Chris and especially Roberto for collecting them from the coppice site.

Just as we started with popping the stakes in lunch was served, and a hearty and very meaty stew was produced.

I was happily finishing off my binders when Alan Ashby arrived and presented me with a "present" which turned out to be a hooky stick, yes he insisted I tried to remove the stake Tops traditionally with a billhook not a silky.

Alan demonstrated the technique, which seemed straightforward. And just then Peter Tunks arrived with Phil Hart both keen to "advise" and "help".

Well I have to say that it's a lot harder than you think, when it goes well it's fast and neat, but the bulk of my attempts did not follow this plan (much to the amusement of my audience), and I managed to cut through the top binder a couple of times (funny how easy they were to cut). Personally I think we will have problems with this, especially on tough chestnut stakes.

Event reports

Everyone managed to finish in pretty good time, and Peter Tunks decided to award a £5 prize for the best stake line and this was awarded to Mike Mason's team of Andy Delves & Martin Cheesman

Pictures as always

flic.kr/s/aHskKvjuUS



Training Day 2 Dallington

With a forecast for torrential rain all day we had a really good turn out, so good we had to double up in places as we did not have a huge length of hedge to work with.

After the usual formality of signing on and sorting out who was working where the heavens opened, but much to Chris BC's disappointment it stopped after a few minutes.

The hedge was a mix of different species, and most of the plants were quite small, with just a few more "meaty" ones to work with. The frith pile was thus very small.

David Dunk fulfilled one of his ambitions and managed to pleach and remove the heal on a stem using just a penknife.

Most sections went down pretty quickly, and with nice sunny weather there was time for people to chat without getting soaked. Sadly Bob's truck broke down, but as he was in the cafe he called on the support of another diner and the stakes and binders were delivered in good time.

Because of the slightly sparse material we finished the hedge at 3'6" rather than the usual 4'

Event reports

The landowner put on a stunning lunch of home reared pig, soup, cheese and bikkies, coffee and beer, good job most people had finished prior to lunch after that lot.

All in all a great day out, I reviewed my pictures and there is even one of Chris smiling

Pictures <https://photos.app.goo.gl/NZf1TCe5PP8>



Training day 3 Magham Down

An overcast, but generally dry start to the day, back at Magham Down, site of a number of previous events. What was immediately noticeable was the regrowth from the old competition hedge, it sat pretty dormant for over a year, which is why we didn't award a regrowth prize. A hot dry summer however did the trick and the thorn was transformed, most sections had regrowth of 3 feet ABOVE the binders, some of which had come from very low in the hedge. Our regular cutters were all signed in and raring to go, but we only had 5 trainees. We decided to give each trainee a section and a trainer each, and divide the rest of the hedge between the regular cutters. Our trainees trickled in once we got started cutting, so Gary allocated them each to a separate cutter.

Our hedge was a little bigger than we used to at this site, so many of us who didn't bring a chainsaw were either doing a lot of axe work, or getting a helping hand from the wise cutters.

The hedge went down quite quickly, and right on cue Phil Hart arrived with stakes and binders

Event reports

I was working next to David Dunk, who helped with some chainsaw work, and provided a master class on axe work. He manages to make it look so easy, although with a lot more practice I'm sure we can give him a run for his money.

A little earlier than expected the rain started, so Chris cheered up. Luckily most of us only had to finish the binders and trim up, so we just got wet rather than soaked.

All the sections were very respectable, this years trainees are picking it up well. Hopefully some of them will get the bug and continue cutting with us.

Big thanks ask always to Chris and Frank for arriving very early and putting out the signs, for Gary helping to organise everyone, and Phil for collecting stakes and binders. And of course to everyone who helped coppice; it's a critical part of hedge laying.

Pictures on google

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/xRfKX5UPQGEYeaUa8>



Editor's deliberations.

Should we be reaching out to the public more as individuals? I have frequently found folk to be interested in what is going on when they come across hedgelaying. This is borne out by Phill's report on the event at Droxford and the society's van on attending shows. However, when working in the field, to my shame, I have found myself tending towards grumpiness when hailed by the great British public and their dogs.

Despite Phil Harts' great efforts in providing a demo hedge and a have-a-go stall, I have always thought that the Nationals are not very public friendly. Watching 100 or so folk wrestling with hawthorn trees in the rain can only occupy the layman's attention for a limited amount of time, unless they understand what is going on. Sooner or later the Nationals will come our way, giving the SOE soc. an opportunity to show what a friendly and conservation minded lot we are. It has been suggested that, when this occurs, the competition should be accompanied by a ploughing match type entertainment and extensive information. Any suggestions?

Bird Watch Oct 2018

We have now entered the time of year when so much changes in the bird scene. Though most of the summer visiting migrants will have already departed, we will probably see the last of the Swallows flying south. The odd one is often recorded well into November. During this month many species of bird that breeds to the north of us, many in the Arctic, will pass through Britain on their journey south. They are known as “passage migrants”. According to the wind direction, especially if it is from the south-east, those travelling down through Scandinavia may drift across the North Sea and arrive here. The tiny Goldcrest, weighing only about five grams, is one so effected by strong winds because, when as light as that, they have not a great deal of say in where they will finish up.

Seed eating birds will form flocks and there appears to be a good crop of Beech masts that have already fallen. The local Chaffinches have found them already and will be joined later by some from abroad. These visiting Chaffinches are very like ours, but it is found that more

females: smaller and therefore more susceptible to the cold, come to Britain while many of the larger males remain farther north. Their Latin name is “Fringilla Coelebs” meaning bachelor, as the wintering flocks in Scandinavia are mainly male and it is there that bird species were classified. If you come across a group feeding on the ground look out for any with white rumps amongst them as these will be Bramblings, also a finch, that replaces the Chaffinch as breeding birds at higher latitudes in the Birch forests.

Into October the first winter migrants will arrive to escape the severe weather where they bred. There appears a to be a generous crop of Hawthorn berries across the locality and these will sustain, initially, the passing Ring Ousels on their way to winter in the Nile region of Egypt and then the Redwings and Fieldfares. These are all thrushes and so distinct from our local Blackbirds and Song thrushes.

On the grass fields you may come across a flock of Meadow Pipits. These are small, about the size of a Robin with a speckled breast like

a tiny thrush but with a white outer-tail stripes. They have a distinctive hanging flight and high-pitched call. Though they are among the most widespread birds in the country they are easily overlooked and are less common than years ago when they regularly bred on the Downs. I can remember finding their nests in the grazing fields here. Many of these will be from the hills and moors up country and they move southwards within the country as the weather deteriorates and the days get shorter, as do many species.

Though this sounds as if we are coming into a gloomy time of year, all is not bad because birds show quite well in the winter so important is their food supply that they remain feeding while approached and with the leaves off the trees, cannot hide so well.

Nov 2018

Many different species of birds are coming to the feeders now, so we have the opportunity of detailed close-ups of them. Apart from just identifying them, more interest can be had by determining the age and sex of some species. Where there is a marked difference between the male and female such as in Pheasants, Mallard, Chaffinch and

Bullfinch it is immediately apparent that the showy colours of the males are for attraction and display while the more sombre females are for camouflage while incubating the eggs or brooding nestlings. There are some species however where the sexes are very similar such as Blue and Great Tits, Kingfisher and the Woodpeckers. These breed in holes or cavities so there is no need for dull colours to protect against predators.

Other species have small differences in the plumage to distinguish sexes. The Great Spotted Woodpecker, so common on the feeders, all have the bright red underparts but only the male shows red on the back of the head while the juveniles wear a red cap. Male Blackbirds are coal black only when adult and show brown in the wings until they moult at the end of their second summer. This can give us increased knowledge and interest in the subject. Late hatched Goldfinches still have grey heads with no red, white or black yet showing.

I have recently received information of interesting birds locally. A Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, now a very scarce bird, was seen in Plumpton Green last month. No bigger than a Sparrow,

this barred black and white bird is always secretive and easy to overlook so this is a good record.

Another call I received was of a White Stork on a field locally. Until recently such a record would have been of a bird from the Continent that had drifted off course on its migration south in autumn. However, some of these birds have been controversially introduced into West Sussex thus confusing the origin of any of them seen. There has been a successful re-introduction of Red Kites that at one time were commonplace in Britain but were persecuted down to half a dozen pairs in mid-Wales. Now they are numerous in the Home Counties and regularly seen locally.

Great Bustards that until the early nineteenth century roamed wide

open spaces have are now doing well on Salisbury Plain after being released. There is little or no evidence that White Storks were ever a breeding species in England and this has split the birding fraternity. The only record that was found by a thorough researcher was of a pair attempting to breed in 1416 in Edinburgh. No record is known of their success. Occasionally other birds over-shoot from Mainland Europe and nest here. Bee-Eaters bred in 1955 at Streat sandpit and more recently on the Isle of Wight. No one has suggested that they be re-introduced to Britain but, by the criteria of the White Storks, they have a better case. Please keep letting me know of interesting sightings.

Reg Lanaway

Red Kites!



Committee Members and Officers

President	Peter Tunks 01293 784826
Vice President	Bob Hunt 01273 400898
Chairman & Training Officer:	Phil Hart 0771 705 4172
Vice Chairman	Frank Wright 01273 493309
Secretary and Show Officer	Chris Burchall-Collins 01273 495026
Treasurer	Mathew Beard 0797009549
Assistant Secretary:	Vacant
Membership Secretary: and Competition Secretary	Phill Piddell 01580 850768
Newsletter Editor	Ian Runcie 01273 567278
Awards Officer:	Mike Parrot -12733410292
Coppicing Officer and committee member	Tim Hughes 01444892742
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 to Ian by mid March please

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Acknowledgements: red kite Flikyr [jconway1](#) & [Adam Lederer](#)

Phill Pidell did all the unsigned event reports and other pics (busy chap).