

SOUTH OF ENGLAND HEDGE LAYING SOCIETY

Reg Charity No 1046124



January 2013

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi all,

I hope you all had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year. It's been good to see new members at the training days and it would be nice to see some old ones. We are always in need of trainers.

It's been an easy season for you hedgerlayers so far. Still there is time to change that – the President vs Chairman hedge is bigger??? All being well we will have a BBQ after.

I've been to a lot of competitions this season and so many of you do not know how to lay off. You should lay off to the back of the hedge, not the front. Think of the cutter next to you. The other thing I've seen is cutters stacking the hedge up on the last stem of the cutter next to them. This is not on. When he cuts his last stem the hedge drops on top of him. If you need a lesson in laying off, let us know. Moan over!

Good hedgelaying to you all. Bye for now.

Gary

Hi Everybody,

I hope you have all had a lovely Christmas and very best wishes for 2013.

Included with this edition is the application form for our Annual Competition. Please complete and return to Jim Vantassel as soon as possible please. If you want to e-mail it back to me that will be fine. Details of the President vs Chairman competition are also in the Newsletter.

As I have said before, we are trying to use e-mail as much as possible. Many of you have already signed up to this but if you haven't and have an e-mail address we would be grateful if we could use that method of communication. It is faster and much much cheaper. Please send your e-mail address to me – rachel.howkins@btopenworld.com. Many thanks.

Rachel

IMPROVER'S DAY

Saturday, 12TH January 2013

Some of you may have received a note giving the wrong date for the Improvers Day. It is 12th January and not 13th. Apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused you.

Please contact Mike Parrott for further details.

➤ **ITEMS FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER TO RACHEL BY MID-MARCH PLEASE** ◀

Points Trophy 2012/2013 (Provisional)

With the results in from the delayed Hurstpierpoint Hedge Laying Competition, the results have now opened up the table in the Local Championship. All eyes are now focused on the Society's annual competition in February to decide the Champion.

Points from the Hurstpierpoint Hedge Laying Competition.

	Points
Clive Gilligan	10
Bob Whitaker	9
Gary Moore	8
	7
	6
	5
	4
	3
	2
	1

Don't forget to get
you applications in to
Jim.

Name	Laughton	Hurstpierpoint	West Grinstead	SEHLS Annual Comp	Total	
Bob Whitaker	9	9	9	0	27	
Gary Moore	7	8	8	0	23	
Dave Truran	4		5	0	9	
Ron Moulard	2		5	0	7	
Michael Bentley	8		3	0	11	
Paul Matthews	10		10	0	20	
Clive Gilligan	6	10	6	0	22	
Roger Taylor	3		4	0	7	
Mark Hudson	7		7	0	14	

HURSTPIERPOINT PLOUGHING MATCH HEDGE LAYING COMPETITION.

Results (Provisional)

		Points for the points trophy
1	Tony Gallows	Not entered
2	Clive Gilligan	10
3	Bob Whitaker	9
4	Gary Moore	8
5		7
6		6
7		5
8		4
9		3
10		2
11		1
Best work on a poor length	Clive Gilligan	
Regrowth	Bob Whitaker	

I've received the following captions for the photo of Gary in the last issue!

"Gary Moore" CHAIR MAN of the newly formed "South of England Sofa Laying Society"

"Let me think a while, do I use this sofa for the gap in the hedge or shall I put in some dead wood? I know, I will ring Des..."

At least someone appreciates the sofa dumped in the hedge. Gary rests awhile to let the other competitors catch up...

"Just waiting for my fish & chips". Hungry young lion, Gary Moore, has all the local takeaways deliver to him in deepest rural Sussex

"I had an 'orrible dream last night, I dreamt a guy from the Midlands came down to Kent and won a competition. Cor blimey it made me shudder!"

HEDGE RAMBLINGS

EU CUTS THREATEN THE COUNTRYSIDE

You can't open a newspaper these days, in fact you don't even have to open the paper, it's invariably on the front page, so much debate about the European Union (EU). Some politicians want us out, some politicians want us in. It's an in out, in out situation. When you are in they want you out, when you are out they want you in.

The problem it seems could be the cuts in the EU budget which may affect the countryside. This we are told by the Campaign to Protect Rural England, will affect the green farming schemes. These are ultimately paid for by the Common Agricultural Policy and the Campaign believes that such a cut in funding will affect farmers who look after the countryside. Whilst huge amounts are paid to farmers in the European Union, they could be whittling away at many green schemes. (It would be interesting to know what our local Green Party MP has to say on this matter).

The Campaign to Protect Rural England calculates that some 40 odd percent of hedgerows and approximately 24 per cent of stonewalls are actually managed under a range of environmental schemes and that any cuts in the budget are likely to force farmers and estate managers to reconsider their approach to these important parts of our heritage. It could force farmers to bring fallow land back into production, thus affecting wildlife habitat.

Since the South of Hedgelaying Society Newsletter will not go to press until after Christmas, I do trust that all members had an enjoyable Christmas and hope you all have a good hedgelaying New Year. Please don't forget to enter the various events into your new diary.

Bill Hook



NATURE NOTES

Occasionally in nature the unexpected occurs. Generally there is an explanation to such behaviour such as strong winds from an unusual direction causing migrating birds to arrive at places thousands of miles from where they intended. Another phenomenon is termed an **irruption**. This is when, after a successful breeding season and the population is unusually large, the species has used up the food supply in its normal range. Certain species, Crossbill and Waxwing in particular come to us across the North Sea in great numbers, perhaps twice a decade, to make use of the pine cone seeds and berries each requires.

This year in Scandinavia, there has been an unprecedented movement of Blue Tits. There their staple winter food is the beech mast. The autumn of 2011 yielded a vast crop of these, the result being a good survival rate at the end of the winter. This extra population bred well but this autumn the beech mast crop failed so vast numbers of Blue Tits are on the move. In this part of the world they are recognised as short distant migrants, leaving Scandinavia for the northern part of the main Continent. As far as I can research none has ever reached the U.K.

In South-western Sweden at Falsterbo, a famous migration study area on about the same latitude as Southern Scotland, during the first week of October over a quarter of a million Blue Tits were counted moving south. During that time twelve thousand were ringed. On each of two days over two thousand were caught which to any of us who have experienced Blue Tits in the hand know how many sore fingers must have resulted. They not so much peck as grab and twist! There will, by the law of averages, be recoveries of some of these birds and who knows where they will turn up.

Birds and some insects - think of the Painted Lady butterflies a few years ago - have the ability to fly across the sea to overcome food supply problems. Earthbound creatures do not. Even a large waterway or transport system can restrict the movement of small mammals. Voles in particular regularly breed in large numbers and exhaust their food supply. This results in a crash of numbers each four to seven years and then numbers rebuild to a peak. Avian predators of these small animals also respond to them as their food supply, the numbers of young they produce those years varies from none at all to an extra brood accordingly.

The changing of the seasons is always interesting to note. The autumn movement of birds can be quite dramatic when the winds are favourable. Sometimes it can be more to the benefit of the observer rather than the birds. Clear skies, particularly at night, are the conditions for a straight forward uninterrupted night migration but this goes largely unobserved. There were times recently where the clear conditions occurred early in the evening and the birds left, got well into their journey and then encountered heavy cloud cover right to ground level. The result was the grounding of huge numbers of birds unable to navigate further. Those able to find land moved on when the weather improved but according to the reports from people on boats, many perished in the sea.

As usual I tried to log the date of the latest Swallow seen. There were reports of late broods with young not leaving the nest until mid-October so it was not surprising that quite a number have been reported in early November. I saw small groups on the first three days of the month.

Because of the failure of seed and berry crops, particularly in Scandinavia, many more winter visitors have been seen early this season. Lookout for Bramblings, striking finches showing orange, black and white. They are about the same size as a Chaffinch but as they fly up, they usually feed on the ground, show a white patch on the rump. They have been seen in Sussex since mid-October. Further north in the Scottish Isles, flocks of Waxwings have already arrived.

On the Alders, those trees that grow in damp areas and produce small seed-bearing cones, you will find Siskins and Redpolls. Both are small streaked finches and need patience to find and observe. Today I checked the Alders near here and found a couple of Siskins by the slight movement high in the tree. Something then alarmed them and a flock of ten flew to the next tree. I had no idea so many were there but I suppose their camouflage and secretive movements do not expose them to predators.

Goldcrests, those tiniest of British birds, have also reached our shores in large numbers from Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. Last winter few were seen but it would seem that after a good breeding season their population is large and winds favoured their migration to Britain. If they weigh only five grams and are high in the sky in a strong wind, they have little choice in where they touch down.

At this the darkest part of the year as the daylight fails, the birds disappear to roost safely through the night. Most do so with as little fuss and display as possible so that their place of concealment is not obvious to predators. Evergreen shrubs and ivy-covered trees give well hidden cover and also shelter from wind and rain. Many small birds use the nest-boxes we put up for them to breed and one was known to have twenty-seven Wrens use it during a cold spell, huddling together for warmth. Cavities in trees or buildings are also used and often the telltale pile of droppings below gives the game away.

Others, like the migratory Starlings from mainland Europe, gather in pre-roost assemblies before flying to a communal roost such as the Pier off Brighton. Gulls of all species that feed on farmland and rubbish tips find their way to the shore or large bodies of water such as reservoirs and lakes for the night. Rooks and Jackdaws roost together high and unprotected in tall trees, clinging on during the darkness, whatever the weather. In Oakwood, just off Streat Lane, over thirty Rooks bred in the Ash trees. Today only a handful of those nests are intact so strong have been the gales this autumn. Any observations of roosts would be welcome and would increase our knowledge of local wildlife.

The winter visitors are now well established in the district. I wrote of the possibility that Waxwings might arrive and indeed they have, many widespread across Britain with some as far south as Sussex. There was a report of fifteen on the berries of the trees in Tesco car park in Lewes. The Alders with huge crops of seeds in their cones, are visited by Siskins and Redpolls and when that food supply is exhausted, they will come into the gardens to the feeders. They are vast travellers and many of them will have come from Scotland and Scandinavia.

The number of Jays seen this winter is greater than usual. From Kent and Norfolk coastal sites large numbers of Jays have been seen arriving in off the sea. Many more are coming into gardens for food as there are so few acorns. So great is their instinct for storage that they have been watched burying peanuts in the same way as acorns, later to return and find them again as food.

They will be seeking our acorns, eating some and burying others for use late in the winter. Many will not be found again and in this way oak trees are planted as the Jays plant them at the correct depth for germination – wonderful!

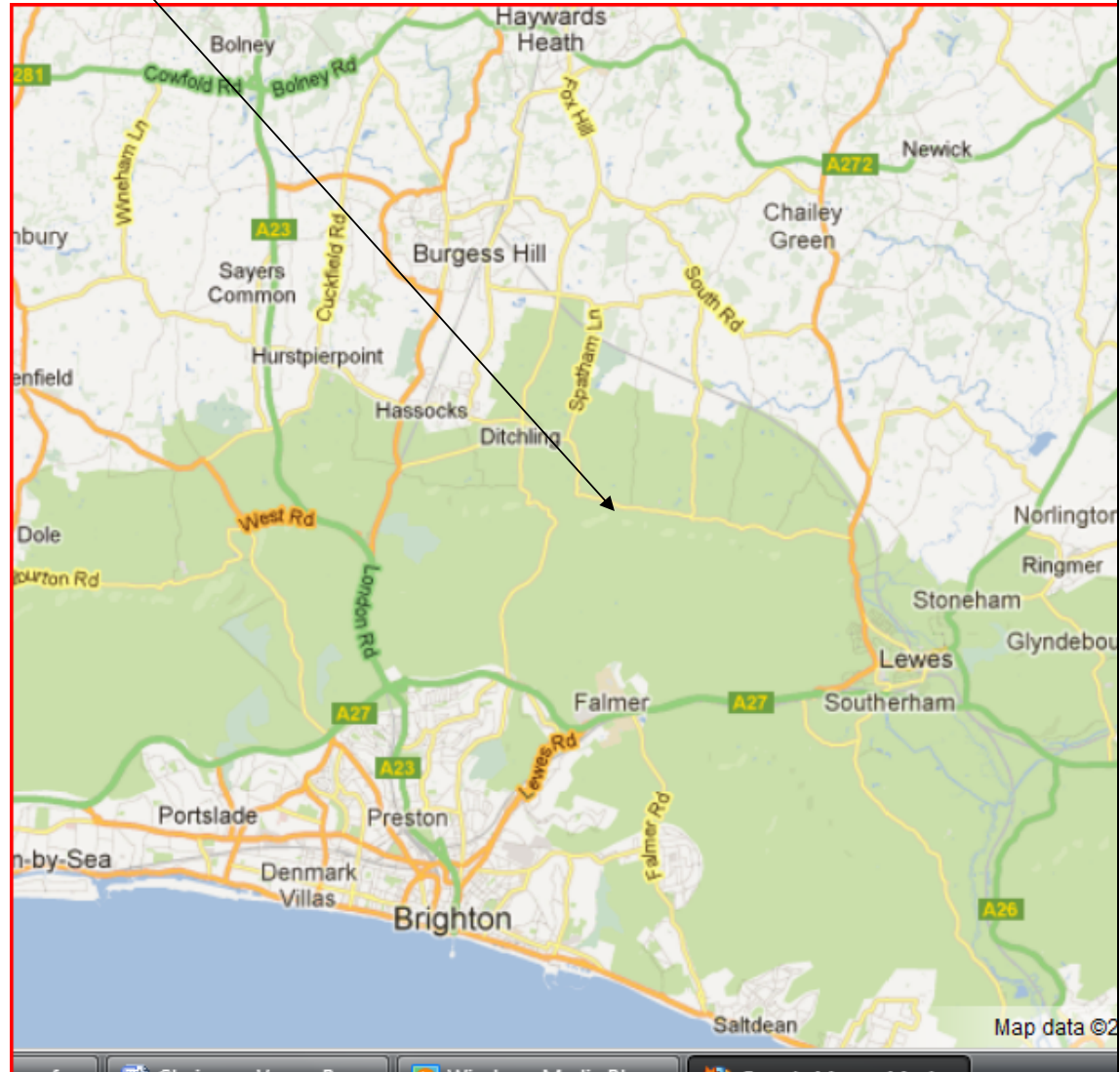
Reg Lanaway



Chairman vs President Hedge Laying Competition 19th Jan 2013

Middleton Lane, Westmeston, Hassocks, Nr Lewes. BN8 8RL

Location



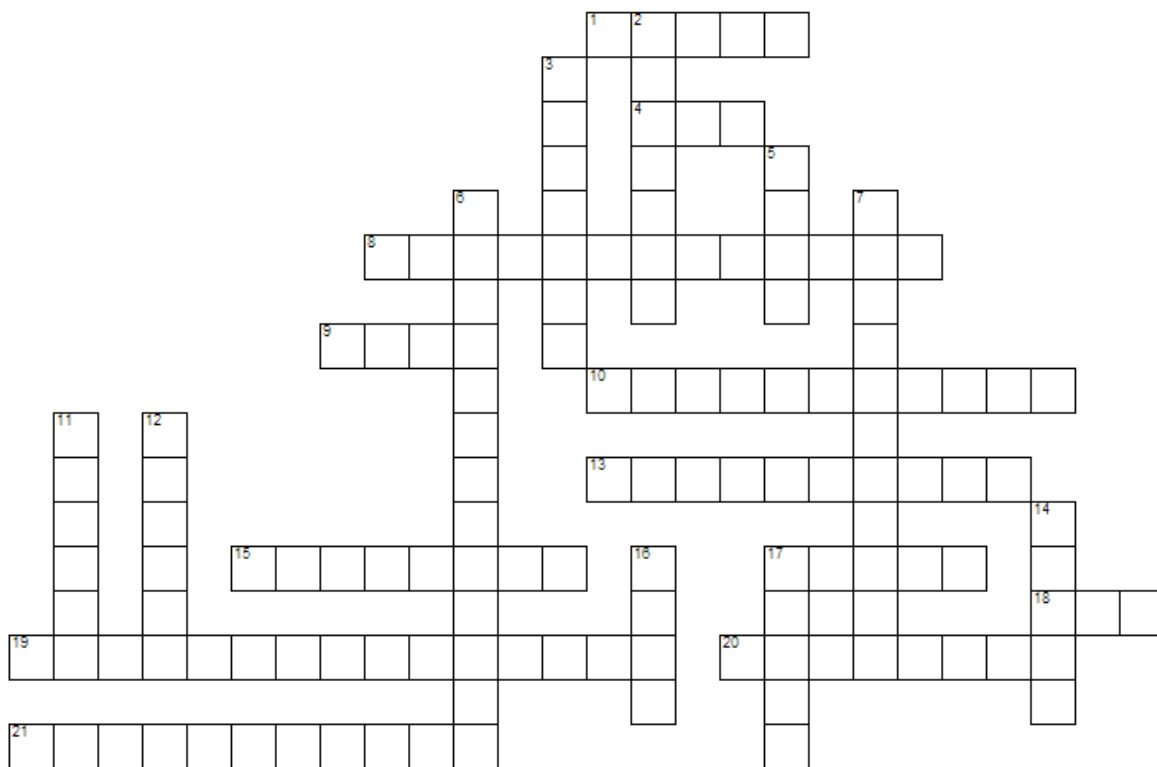
Hedge Entrance



Chairman Verses President

After last year's successful contest at Wakehurst Place, a hedge has been lined up for the 19th January 2013 to see who can take the lead. At present the score is Chairman 1 President 1..... it's all to play for! If you would like to take part or help with the burning up contact Gary Moore on 07767894961 to book a place. (It will help secure you some food!)

Hedge Laying



Across		Down	
1	Keeps your drink hot	2	A tool with two handles
4	Personal protective equipment	3	Long handled tool with a curved blade
8	Protects your hands	5	Short handled tool with a curved blade, can be used with a hooked stick
9	Blunts tools	6	Protects your eyes
10	Skill and speed contest	7	A multi-tool, good for removing wire
13	It has a long blade full of teeth	11	The hedge layers specialist cut
15	22 yards	12	Long thin hazel stem
17	White, cold, crisp, thaws, dries up the ground	14	You cannot eat this one with chips, onion rings and grilled tomatoes
18	This tool has a toe, cheek, eye, belly, shoulder, heel, and a throat.	16	Removed at an angle to shed water
19	An abrasive piece of rock	17	The "off cuts"
20	Short handled tool with a curved blade		
21	Keeps your feet dry		

Answers next time.

ASH DIE BACK

USEFUL INFO

East Sussex County Council

<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/woodlands/ashdieback/default.htm>

Forestry Commission video

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara#Symptoms>

**Please report any sightings of
the disease immediately**

In England and Wales

Chalara helpline: 08459 33 55 77
(open 8am – 6pm every day)
plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
Fera: 01904 465625
planthealth.info@fera.gsi.gov.uk

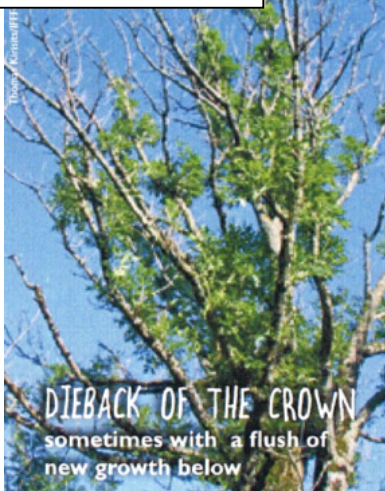
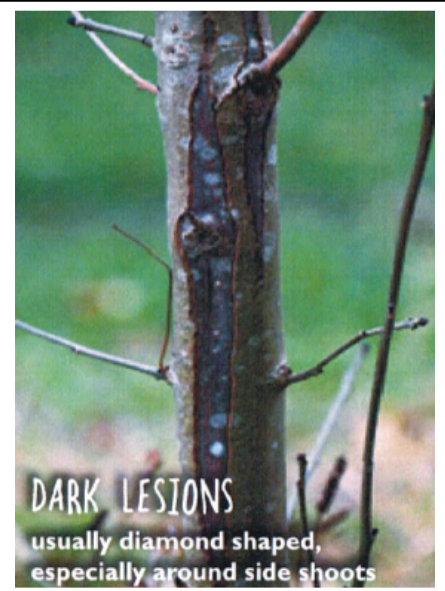
In Scotland

Forestry Commission Scotland: 0131 314 6156
(9am – 5pm weekdays & out of hours
messaging system)
fcscotlandenquiries@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

In Northern Ireland

Department of Agriculture and Rural
Development (Northern Ireland): 0300 200 7847
dardhelpline@dardni.gov.uk

woodlandtrust.org.uk/treedisease



ASH (FRAXINUS EXCELSIOR)

About the ash

Ash is a native, deciduous tree with pale grey bark and distinctive black-budded twigs. It comes into leaf around May, flowers in April and produces ash keys as seeds in autumn. The 'pinnate' structure of ash leaves (with many leaflets along either side of the main leaf stem) creates an open canopy that light can penetrate. This allows a rich variety of plants to grow beneath the trees such as carpets of beautiful bluebells, wild garlic and dog's mercury.

Ash is very important for wildlife

It supports more than 100 species of insect, including 60 of the rarest. A tree can live for centuries, providing habitat for deadwood species such as the lesser stag beetle and birds like owls, woodpeckers and nuthatch which nest in the hollows.



How do we use ash trees?

Ash wood is strong and flexible, able to withstand pressure and splintering. Anglo-Saxons used it for spears and tools – today it is a popular wood for furniture-making and laminates. Ash also coppices well, producing excellent firewood.



Ash or Rowan?

The rowan or 'mountain ash', *Sorbus aucuparia*, is not a true ash tree. It's actually a member of the rose family, Rosaceae, and is not at risk from ash dieback. Ash trees are from the olive family, Oleaceae.



Precautions when visiting woods

If you're heading out for a woodland walk, help slow the spread of the disease by taking some simple precautions:



- Do not remove any plant material (firewood, sticks, leaves or cuttings) from the woodland
- Where possible, before leaving the woodland, clean soil, mud, leaves and other plant material from footwear, clothing, dogs, horses, the wheels and tyres of bicycles, baby buggies, carriages and other vehicles, and remove any leaves which are sticking to your car
- Before visiting other countryside sites, parks, garden centres and nurseries, thoroughly wash footwear, wheels and tyres in soapy water
- Follow the instructions on any signs.

The alkaline bark of ash supports specialist lichens and mosses. Its leaves provide food for moths while brown hairstreak butterflies breed in the canopy.



Our native woodland is facing real and growing threats and we need to take action NOW – with your support we can make a difference.

woodlandtrust.org.uk/treedisease

The full leaflet can be found on the Woodland Trust website as above.

WILL ALL TROPHY HOLDERS ARRANGE TO GET THEIR TROPHIES BACK TO JIM VANTASSEL BY THE END OF JANUARY PLEASE

MEMBERSHIP

Dick has found an apprentice Membership Secretary!

Phill Piddell has agreed to learn the ropes over the next few months, with a view to taking on full responsibility if agreed at the next AGM



2013		
January	5 th	Coppicing – Venue to be announced
	10 th	Committee Meeting
	12 th	Improver's Day – Chichester, West Sussex
	19 th	President vs Chairman Competition, Wakehurst Place
February	15 th	Annual General Meeting, Plumpton College
	23 rd	29th SEHLS Annual Competition – Chichester, West Sussex
March	16 th	Charity Hedgelaying Day (Bi-annual event) – Pickwell Lane, Bolney
	21 st	Committee Meeting
April		
May	11 th	Plumpton Open Day
	25 th	Heathfield Show
June	7 th -9 th	South of England Show, Ardingly
July	6 th -7 th	Smallholders Show

Committee:

President	John Blake Tel: 01444 482414
Chairman & Training Officer:	Gary Moore Tel: 01273 841854
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

Editor: Rachel Howkins, 9 Manor Crescent, Shottermill, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 1PB

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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<http://www.sehls.co.uk/>