

Committee:

President	Ron Moulard Tel: 01273 513597
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:	Phill Piddell Tel: 01580 850768
Competition Secretary/Awards Officer:	Jim Vantassel Tel: 07769 219196
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
Assistant Coppicing Officer:	Tim Hughes Tel: 01444 892742

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 Hedgelayering Society.

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

Email: thesouthofenglandhedgelayers@googlemail.com

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

EUROPE'S FIELD BOUNDARIES – hedged banks/hedgerows/field walls (stonewalls)/ dead brushwood hedges/bent over hedges/woven hedges/ wattle fences/traditional wooden fences - by Georg Müller. Two volumes. Publication due 1 August 2013.

For further details contact:

e-mail: Mueller-georg@web.de, website: www.wallhecke.de



2013		
September	12 th	Committee Meeting
	20 th -21 st	Weald Wood Fair
	28 th	Coppicing, Wadhurst
October	5 th -6 th	Autumn Show, South of England Show Ground
	19 th	Training Day 1, Colbrans Farm
November	14 th	Committee Meeting
	16 th	Training Day 2, Donnington
	30 th	Coppicing, Wakehurst
December	14 th	Training Day 3, Fairlight
2014		
January	4 th	Coppicing, Spatham Lane or Wadhurst
	9 th	Committee Meeting
	11 th	Improvers Day, Venue to be confirmed
	25 th	President vs Chairman Team competition
February	14 th	Annual General Meeting, Plumpton College
	22 nd	SEHLS Annual Competition
March	15 th	Hedgelaying Day
	20 th	Committee Meeting

Kestrels, though in the news for their apparent scarcity across the country, have fared better here. Three of the four pairs we recorded were successful, rearing ten young. The unsuccessful pair seems to have perished, the male earlier than his mate and neither has been seen recently.

2012 was such a poor year for fruit on the trees and hedgerows. This year looks much more promising with Acorns in abundance on the Oaks and the Beech trees are bearing large numbers of their nuts known as masts. Early in the year we were warned that a lack of pollinating insects, honey bees in particular, would cause a shortage of fruit but that does not seem to be the case. There are some old miseries about who always look for and predict the worst!!



The Grey Squirrels are now feeding on the Hazel nuts along the lane, leaving the shed nutshells on the road. The nuts seem hardly worth taking so early. They have not developed hard centres yet but as they take and eat them, there must be some value to them but it seems a pity that by the time we might go to gather any, all will have gone.

Reg Lanaway

“WITH A SILVER FLASH THE HAY MEADOW FELL”

“With a silver flash the hay meadow fell, as the swish, swish, swish of the scythes slid through the grass, dancing the dance, as the scythe was skillfully swung.... ”

All the action was taking place at the “John French Sussex Scything Championship” held on the 18th August at Battle, East Sussex.

Six Scything contestants took part, each mowing a 5m X 5m square plot. The grass was a thick mixture of unimproved wild flower meadow and some plots were standing better than others but it was the fun of taking part that counted. The competition was judged on time for mowing technique and finished quality. In the afternoon the top 3 contestants were teamed up with the bottom 3 contestants to compete over plots of 10m X 10m.

While the birds were singing, the scythes were swinging, you could only hear the friendly banter ringing out, as the competitors sliced through the sward. I vaguely remember being referred to as the “cart horse team” - we certainly had the horse power, as we tackled unlucky plot 7 (plenty of flat grass). Out in front were the lean racing machines, Gary & Mark Moore, followed up closely by the quality work of Frank Wright and Holford Pitcher.

With Luz-Marina supplying an excellent picnic lunch with plenty of tea, an enjoyable day was had by all. Spectators included our President Ron Moulard.

Results

Open 5X5m

1. Mark Moore
2. Frank Wright
3. Darren Holbert

Team 10X10m

1. Mark Moore & Holford Pitcher
 2. Gary Moore & Frank Wright
 3. Darren & Phil Hart
- Best work on a poor pitch Darren Holbert & Phil Hart

Phil Hart

NATURE NOTES

As this most unusual year has progressed, some very interesting and unexpected facts have emerged. Following the very late spring, growth of plants and much wildlife has now caught up.

I earlier noted that Swallows seemed erratic and indeed they had a very strange breeding season. The first nest of these migrant birds, in Streat, contained five fully feathered young before the end of May while some of the resident Blue Tits were still incubating eggs. These very early Swallows, in the second week of July, were close to hatching their second broods whereas others were still site hunting for first nests. The spread of these in the locality is erratic. They generally breed in small colonies and in Streat and East Chilton numbers were slightly up on last year. Usually about ten pairs breed around the stables at the college but this year just one nest produced four young.

The extraordinary comparison with these are the House Martins, that up to the end of May appeared very sparse but in June the bulk of the colony returned and, on counting the occupied nests, a total of fifty were recorded in comparison with forty-six last year and forty-nine in 2011. Since they and the Swallows all feed on flying insects, of which there seems to be plenty, it is difficult to find the reason.

I have been following the progress of the tagged Cuckoos on the website and it is only through this method that their early departure has been proved. The male "Sussex" tagged on Ashdown Forest in May had reached Sardinia before the end of June on his return to Africa.

The number and variety of moths I have caught and identified indicates the huge food supply in the form of caterpillars that has been available for young birds. So far nearly eighty different species have come to the moth trap light and during the hot spell up to one hundred were caught in one night. Amongst them were five species of Hawk Moth and some spectacularly camouflaged ones that looklike dead twigs or bird droppings.

Many of the plants in the woods or beside the lanes caught up well after the late start they had. The Meadowsweet came out on time and, using the recipe for Elderflower, makes an excellent white wine. I made some Bramble tip wine in the first week of May which has now finished working, is crystal clear and ready to bottle. Making home-made wine is so straight forward and I am surprised not more is made. Many people say they used to make wine and some still have the equipment so why not make use of some of the bounty of the countryside in that way.

Each year we, under licence, check the nest boxes that have been situated in local Barn Owl territories. Last year six pairs raised thirteen young but not one box had either eggs or chicks in it this season. On visiting most of the Barn Owl sites, we found birds present and on two occasions a pair flew out. Unfortunately, this is not usually a good sign as when both are together roosting in the nest there is no breeding attempt. This is a result of the very cold early spring when food was in short supply and the birds were of low body weight meaning the burden of a breeding season could be detrimental to any success and the survival of, particularly, the females. A year off could be Nature's way of ensuring the survival of the species and the population can recover in a couple of years.

It is quite usual for Barn Owls to breed later. When a bird hunts mainly at night it would seem sensible to find food for their nestlings at a time of year when there is more darkness. Indeed fresh eggs of this species have been found in every month of the year and in a good "Vole Year" many produce a second brood. We will check again later in the year.

In the Barn Owl boxes not occupied, we have found nesting Stock Doves. In one box two nests, one with two eggs and the other with a nestling and an infertile egg were found. The Stock Dove is a bird easily overlooked. Smaller than a Wood Pigeon, it has no white on it and has black wing bars. They usually nest in holes in trees, cliffs or between bales in barns and, unlike the wood pigeon, is not a legitimate quarry species.

The Marsden Memorial Hedge at Lindfield

David Marsden was an enthusiastic hedge layer who had to give up Saturday training days due to his work. He wanted to carry on being of use to the society, and so volunteered to fill the post of Secretary's Assistant. He became invaluable to the committee and always proposed the correct solution to any problem at meetings and it was with great sadness that we learnt of his sudden death on 13 November 2003.

It was thought that a hedge would be an appropriate memorial, an idea readily supported by David's widow, Anne. The hunt was on for a suitable place to plant a hedge on public land. It took some time to get permission from the authorities and when this was granted a group from the society planted hawthorn whips on a green by the bowls club in Backwoods Lane, Lindfield. The brass plaque was unveiled on Saturday, 20 January 2007 by local people who had known David.



By spring 2012 the little hedge was tall enough to be laid. Ron Mouland did the work in time for lunch with Anne where we remembered our departed friend. The hedge is doing well and still looked after by the South of England Hedge Laying Society.

The brass plaque and Society Past President, John Blake (right) and current President, Ron Mouland beside the hedge in Lindfield



HEDGE RAMBLINGS

A LONG WAY TO GO TO LAY A HEDGE!!

It seems a long time since the end of last winter's hedge-laying season when the Society managed to move westwards for its annual competition at Donnington, near Chichester. In fact it was probably the furthest west the Society has managed to venture for a competition in its 26 year history. Any further west and the competitors will be expecting overnight accommodation including breakfast as well as lunch!

Spring was cold and wet this year and it seemed that summer would never arrive. Then, all of a sudden, as so often happens in this country, we get a heat wave which coincided with the Australians arriving for the Ashes series, a competition which is somewhat older than our own – but no less important. This made me consider if they laid hedges in Australia and what styles they might lay – upside down of course – and there are a lot of sheep in Australia.



Much of their history revolves around the penal system and some of the convicts would have been skilled in hedge laying. The most popular style down under is Midland with the South of England a close second in areas where hedges are prevalent. The strongest area for the craft is Tasmania, an island which some Australians do not consider to be part of their great nation other than when they are choosing their cricket team!!!

Bill Hook

COPPICING

The Society needs your help so why not get involved. For more details call our Coppicing Officer, Terry Standen on Tel: 01580 892090

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi all,

The season is about to start, so I hope all your tools are sharp!!! It was good to see that ten of you took up the tool sharpening morning.

We have a lot on this season so do try your best to come along.

I'd like to thank the committee for all their hard work over the last year and look forward to working with them all this season. If there is anyone out there who thinks they can help in any way please give us a call.

I hope you had good summer and look forward to seeing you at one of the hedge laying days.

Gary

Dear All,

Here we are back again for a new season and, yes, I'm banging the drum again!!! It's that eternal issue of SUBS. Like everybody else, the Society can only function successfully if it has sufficient funds. As you know the membership year now starts in April and even for those of us with only limited ability in the maths department, it is easy to work out that we are now nearly 6 months into the Society year. **SO, if you haven't paid, will you please let Phill Piddell have your completed renewal form together with £15 urgently.** As well as helping the Society to function, you also need to be paid up in order to compete in the competitions. For insurance reasons non-payers cannot take part.

A very big thank you must go to Ron Mouland who for many years has towed the two caravans to shows and competitions. However, Ron is now finding it more and more difficult to carry on with this important task and so the Society is looking for helpers who would be willing to take this on – even a team of drivers to spread the workload out a bit. If you can help, please contact either Ron Mouland, Gary Moore or Phil Hart (numbers on Committee list at the back) for details. Your help would be very much appreciated.

For the past few years I have printed the Newsletter courtesy of my business machinery. However, I am now in the process of winding the business down and will not in future have the facility to do the booklet printing. Having carried out a few experiments I have found that this A4 format seems to be the best I can produce with the machinery I will have at my disposal. I hope you like it. It does give much better definition of the photographs and the larger print is easier to read. For those receiving the Newsletter by e-mail, photos are even better and it is by far the best way for us to communicate with members. **Please remember to keep us up-to-date with email addresses etc.** If you don't we cannot be held responsible if you don't receive the various bits and pieces from the Society.

Many thanks to all those who have sent in bits and pieces for the Newsletter. I am always on the look out for new items so if you have anything you think would be of interest do let me know.

With very best wishes for a good season.

Rachel



September 2013

Society raises £1,630 for Chailey Heritage

After a convivial lunch at a local pub, Ron Mouland (President), John Blake (stalwart ex-President) and I were given a tour of some of Chailey Heritage by Ann Jones (Chair of the Friends of Chailey Heritage). Ann took us to the junior school department and explained that, because the children have ever larger wheel chairs, the amount of space that is required to accommodate them is huge. Likewise, if there is a coach outing, only part of the vehicle is taken up by the children. In the beautiful and spacious chapel Ron presented the sum of £1,630.00, the final sum collected, and worked hard for by the few members who braved the wet and windy conditions at Ansty on Saturday 16 March 2013. Ron spoke for us all when he said, 'It was well worth getting cold and wet to do something for those deserving kids'.

Mike Parrott



➤ ITEMS FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER TO RACHEL BY END MID-NOVEMBER PLEASE ◀