

SOUTH OF ENGLAND HEDGE LAYING SOCIETY

Reg Charity No 1046124



December 2011

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

I start with the sad news of Maureen Mouland who recently passed away.

Most of us would have known her as the sweetie lady. Maureen was always there ploughing - matches, nationals and our competition - walking the hedge with her bag of sweets and a big smile. She will be missed by us all. So let our thoughts go out to Ron and family. Bye Maureen x

WANTED

20 cutters for president versus chairman's competition at Wakehurst Place on 28 January 2012. Meal in pub afterwards with prize giving. To book your place call Gary on 07767894961 or Phil on 07717054172.

Training days have started. More new faces, so our membership is growing nicely. Cutting and attendance have been very good so keep it up. Just got home from second training day and what a day! 40 cutters working away with no chainsaws! It was bliss.... It was good to see some of our longer serving members there as well. Lastly I would like to thank Mike Parrot for all of his hard work. I might be training officer but Mike does all the maps and paperwork for these events. So thank you very much Mike.

With best wishes for Christmas and a Happy New Year

Gary

Hi everybody,

As Gary says, we were all so sorry to hear of the passing of Maureen and Joy. Two very faithful supporters of the Society. We will all miss them and send our sincere condolences to Ron and the family.

I can't believe Christmas is here again. I know it is a sign of old age when time passes quickly but I really do wonder where 2011 has gone to. However, let's be upbeat and look forward to 2012. Please get involved in the competitions etc. There is something for everybody to get involved in - I don't lay hedges but I sure am busy in the background. Also, please be thinking what contributions you could make to the next Newsletter - more contributors and variety of subjects (within the countryside theme of course) would make for a much more interesting read for all members.

Happy Christmas and all the best for 2012

Rachel

➤ **ITEMS FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER TO RACHEL BY 20 MARCH PLEASE** ◀

**WITH BEST WISHES TO ALL MEMBERS AND THEIR
FAMILIES FOR CHRISTMAS AND 2012**

TRAINING REPORT

The first training day on 15 October was one of those warm sunny days we have been experiencing this autumn. The site, close to the Laughton Tower (the remains of a Tudor mansion of the Pelham family) on Colbrans Farm, afforded a picture postcard view of the South Downs. The hedge is ideal for training, requiring only hand tools, peace, perfect peace, chainsaws not required! The participants came from far and wide, Isabel and Debbie came from the Isle of Wight on the early ferry that morning, and arrived on time! The same old problem of blunt tools marred many performances of pleaching, perhaps we should have a sharpening course given by one of our experts. But I think everyone enjoyed the day very much and looked forward to getting back to finishing the hedge on the second training day, which was held on 19 November. The third training day is at Ford on 10 December, the last before the Improvers Day to be held near Cross in Hand. In the past members who are not entering as Improvers have thought that they can't cut on the day. Please apply to me to come, we can always find cants for experienced hedgelayers to demonstrate their skills or improve on their speed.

The compliments of the season to you all.

Mike Parrott

ADVANCED TRAINING

31st December, Punnett's Town, near Heathfield

£50 per person.

To book and obtain more details phone either
Gary on 07767 894961, Phil on 07717 054172
or Mike on 01273 410292

Colbrans Farm

Cow Lane

Laughton

East Sussex

24th November 2011

Dear Phil,

Re: Hedge Laying at Colbrans Farm, 20th November 2011

It was great to meet a few of the old faces associated with the Society on Saturday, and what a day you had managed to choose for a training day, quite unusual I would have thought to have hedge to hedge sunshine all day!

I have never met so many hedge layers at one event, even when we had the society's competition a number of years ago now. I am sure there were not as many. And all done quietly.

I do not have Gary's address so would you please relay my thanks to him and everyone else involved with the day, the instructors and students alike, together you have achieved some fantastic work, something that everyone can be proud of for many years to come. Every time I walk through that field and look at the hedge I will remember that day. The work looks equally as good, if not better, than the work professionals did during the competition all those years ago.

In my view it's a great accomplishment by the students and obviously a great credit to the excellent guidance the students have received from the Society. Plus the fact all the have shown an incredible amount of dedication and a great deal of enthusiasm. Highly commendable.

On Monday I rode along the newly laid hedge and it looked great, please thank everyone for me

Kind regards,
Joe Simpson

I would like to thank all the hedgelayers and those associated with Society for all their support over the last few months at this sad time with the passing of my beloved wife, Maureen (the sweetie lady). Also Joy, her sister. With special thanks to Jackie Gilligan for the lovely photos.

Thanks again. Kind regards.
Ron (Mouland)



89th North Western and Cheshire County Championship Co-ordinated by the Cheshire Ploughing and Hedgecutting Society

Wednesday, 28th September 2011

This was my introduction to hedge-laying in the North West – quite a memorable introduction to judging at a large long-established event. 98 tractor ploughs, 10 pairs of horseploughs, 120 trade stands, 35 hedge-layers (open, novice, Cheshire class), 10 mechanical hedge-cutters.

I was judging the Open Class of 17 cutters whose instructions were “to be in position by 8.30am” having been allocated which cant to lay. At 8.30am everyone had started on a smallish hedge – “no chainsaws, no dead wood”. Usually each cutter has 8 yards, 12 square stakes, laying to 3 ft 6 ins – this year they had 10 yards, 13 stakes to lay to 3 ft finished height. Finish time was “around 2.30 pm” but cutters were only paid £30 if they finished their hedge (having paid a £6 entry fee). A small number struggled on a hot day and finished after 3.30pm!.

No binders, but string is allowed to tie down the layers!

Finishing was completed by hand shears, with soil being dug on the face/arable side of the hedge.

Marking: 35 Cutting and pleaching
 25 Formation of hedge.
 20 Staking and line of hedge.
 20 Brush and back of hedge.

Quite a daunting task for the new judge to get the results to the secretary by 3.00pm!

I hope that I may be invited to judge again, at least there will be fewer surprises.

John Wilson

NATURE NOTES



I think that one of the most wonderful sights in Nature is to see a large gathering of birds of the same type massed in numbers for the benefit of them all. Species that flock together do so for many reasons. Many eyes will find a food supply on which all can make use. In a similar way many eyes can detect a predator so that all can avoid an attack with only a slow or sickly bird being taken and the job of the predator done. This ensures that the fittest and most alert birds survive to breed. An interesting feature of birds that flock is that they all have distinctive

markings on wings, tail rump or face so that with these contact marks they can easily be recognised as allies within that species.

The huge flocks of Starlings in certain parts of the country attract much comment and are often featured on the television. Their displays are always just before darkness as they prepare to roost in communal places such as reed beds, a grove of trees or on Brighton Pier. Their spectacular swirling and orchestrated movements at that time are to confuse predators. This is so different from the way they leave the roost the following morning when, all keen to find food they fly at about house-top height on a broad front, covering as much width as possible. In that way a food source will not be missed, so many eyes are seeking it out.

I wonder if any of you have been following the travels of the five Cuckoos that were fitted with tracking devices in East Anglia last spring. All of them have crossed the Sahara and are in the wooded area of Central Africa. Though they were caught and tagged within a fifty kilometre area, they are now between three and four thousand kilometres apart. The website of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) has easy links to follow their progress which is updated about twice a week and has all the previous plots right back from the time they left this country. The maps are so detailed that you can zoom in on the place each is to see how well wooded an area is or the presence of a water course.

The recent rains have helped with the weed problem in the Hospice ponds so I now feel we are getting on top of the problem. There are plenty of immature newts, dragonfly nymphs and pond skaters to be rescued from the slimy weed when we pull it out. The Pond Skaters are interesting in that the underside is light in colour whereas their backs are dark so that, like fish, they blend in with their surroundings, looking light against the sky and dark against the pond, camouflaging them against predators.

A feature along the lanes and in the hedgerows is the abundance of fruit and berries. Some say that it is the sign on a hard winter to come with Nature storing necessary food for birds and animals. Well it could be but what is certain though, is that it is the result of the dry weather we had in April and May when pollinating insects were very active setting the flowers resulting in such largesse. Not all berries, even some luscious ones, like Bryony, ever seem to be eaten and remain as a necklace of red berries for months.

While the fruit and berries are lush and juicy, we will find the first of the winter thrushes greedily stripping off all they can. It is often where the early Redwings, Fieldfares and continental Blackbirds are to be found. All of these species have been recorded before mid-October this year at the Bird Observatories on the East Coast arriving from across the North Sea.

Also reported in large numbers are Siskins, small streaked green finches that readily come to feeders with Niger seed and peanuts. Some gardens, especially those with conifers seem to

attract more and they are very faithful to certain areas but can be absent from other gardens close by. These birds, though weighing only about ten grams are long distance travellers coming from Eastern Europe, Scandinavia and from the northern parts of Britain. The fascination of birds, I think, is the distance they can travel, taking no heed of boundaries or international territories arriving where there is a food supply and departing when it has been exhausted or weather conditions turn against them.

Often before a cold snap, flocks of the thrushes, Lapwings or Skylarks may be seen heading in a south-westerly direction towards milder parts. This is often a sure sign of what is to come in a few days' time.

I also had the great fortune of ringing a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, the first I have seen for at least a dozen years. This species is very scarce now though easily overlooked. There can be no confusion in its identification as it is similar in size to a Nuthatch and has black and white bands across its back. Should you be lucky enough to see one it is most likely to be feeding on the outer part of the tree canopy rather than against the trunk of the tree where most woodpeckers are to be found.

Now in the third week of October as I write this, Slow Worms and Lizards and the remains of the snails they have eaten have been seen beneath a flat piece of wood on Streat Ridge. Red Admiral butterflies are feeding on the Ivy blossom and a Swallow has just gone over. All is well in this wonderful part of Sussex.

Reg Lanaway

BURN OFF THE CHRISTMAS WEIGHT GAIN!!!!

Coppicing

7 January 2012 – Spatham Lane

More details from:

Terry Standen - 01580 892090 or
Mike Parrott - 01273 410292

COMPETITION RESULTS

For want of something better to do at the beginning of October, a few of our members decided to travel up north to do a bit of hedge-laying – more that dedication to the to the craft. As you will see the 800 odd miles round trip was worth it.

Scottish National – 8th October

Far from ideal conditions, a drizzly wet day and up a very difficult bank. Phil Hart took a roll down the bank within the first 5 minutes but came up smiling as ever and got on with the job ending up the winner of the Novices.

Jackie Gilligan reports that Gary Moore and Clive Gilligan 'clearly did the best two hedges on the day and were definitely neck and neck BUT were docked points for misbehaviour!!!! Actually it was because they laid two different styles next to each other. They did come out 1st and 2nd though.

North East Hedge-laying Match

Open Class:

- 1st Gary Moore
- 2nd Jasper Prachek, South Yorkshire
- 3rd Philip Rowell, South Yorkshire
- 4th Clive Gilligan

Novice Class:

- 1st Phil Hart
- 2nd Harry Humble (Co Durham)
- 3rd James Mason, (Co Durham)
- 4th Stan Pinkney (Co Durham)

Gary was the overall winner and was presented with the Tommy French Memorial Perpetual Challenge Trophy.

SEHLS members also did well in the Nationals:

S of E Open Class:

- 1st Gary Moore
- 2nd John Savings
- 3rd Tony Gallow (Hertfordshire)

S of E Intermediate:

- 1st Dean Dyer (Bucks)
- 2nd Mark Hudson
- 3rd Frank Wright

S of E Veterans:

- 1st Roger Taylor
- 2nd Clive Gilligan
- 3rd Ron Moulard

In addition Peter Tunks came first in the Midland Veteran class.

URGENT : Membership renewal forms and £10 sub. MUST be with Dick Morley (South Tile Barn, Beacon Road, Ditchling, Hassocks BN6 8XB) by the end of December. Failure to do this will mean you will not be able to take part in our competitions etc.





Thanks to Jackie Gilligan for providing the photos from around the country.



UP COMING COMPETITIONS

CHAIRMANS VS PRESIDENTS COMPETITION

28TH JANUARY 2012

Wakehurst Place

**To book and obtain more details phone either Gary on 07767
894961 or Phil on 07717 054172.**

20 cutters needed. First come first served so book early!

28th SEHLS ANNUAL HEDGE-LAYING COMPETITION

to be held at

Plashett Park Farm, Ringmer, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8 4SJ

By kind permission of Bob and Mark Peters

on

Saturday 25th February 2012

Entries close 18th February 2012

Entry form enclosed with Newsletter

HEDGE RAMBLINGS

EU INFLUENCE

You will need to have been lost up the Amazon or on the Siberian Steppes to have missed the intrigue of the European Union's deliberations of the Greek bailout and their Prime Minister, George Papandreu's brinkmanship by calling a referendum and then withdrawing it within 48 hours, and finally standing down to let another politician form a new coalition. Even Italy's Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi's eye for the ladies was pushed into the background whilst so much debate was taking place.

Can you imagine what it would be like if the Eurocrats in Brussels decided that hedge-laying needed to be under their control. They would probably come up with more red tape than we have to endure today to ensure that all hedges laid had some identity to create a hedge-map of the country. This would have to show when the hedge was laid or laid initially, the style the hedge was laid in and all the main species that constituted the hedge. This would ensure that any further hedge-laying and documentation would highlight any new addition to the hedge since it was last laid and would, of course, add even more cost to the laying of the hedge. Would the Eurocrats insist that a South of England style of hedge could only be laid in a defined area in the same way that Stilton Cheese, Eccles Cakes or Cornish Pasties have to be produced in the area around Cropwell Bishop, Colston Basset and Long Clanson, Eccles and Cornwall respectively. Let's face it, we had the straight banana!

Calculating the length of the hedge in metres would probably not cause most artisans too much trouble as most tapes and measuring wheels are calibrated in metric and imperial. However, competitions would require cants to be measured in metric and if we take the following conversions - 1 yd = 915mm; 4 ft = 1220mm - they would probably expect an experienced hedge-layer to lay 10 meters (nearly 11 yards) and a Novice or Veteran 8 metres (8 yards 2ft 3 ins). When the 5 hours duration of the competition is taken into account, the more experienced hedge-layer would be expected to lay 10% more hedge in the time and by the same quirk of mathematics, the Novice/Veteran would also be expected to increase his or her work rates by a similar amount. It would not be much to expect the experienced hedge-layer to increase his/her work rate since most finish easily within the time allowed but it may not be possible for the less experienced layer. On the basis of the extra length of 10% a suitable increase in the time allowed would make the duration of the competition 5½ hours since 10% of 5 hours is 30 minutes

The height of the hedge would no doubt be dictated as 1.2 metres (3 ft 11¼ ins). This would not have any serious effect on the hedge as undulating ground along the length of the hedge would make it almost impossible to detect. However, you could be sure the Eurocrats would not want to make this aspect of the South of England style so easy! If the exponents of our craft were consulted we would need them to KISS off or KEEP IT SIMPLE STUPID.



Bill Hook



(This copy was received prior to the further developments within the Eurozone.)



FOR YOUR DIARY

2011		
Dec	31 st	Advanced Training, Punnets Town, Near Heathfield. Contact Gary on 07767 894961, Phil on 07717 054172 or Mike on 01273 410292 for details.
2012		
January	7 th	Coppicing – Spatham Lane
	14 th	Training Day – Contact Mike Parrott for more details – 01273 410292
	28 th	Chairmans vs Presidents Competition, Wakehurst Place – Gary on 07767 894961 or Phil on 07717 054172 for details.
February	25 th	Annual Competition, Plashett Park Farm, Ringmer. Contact Jim Vantassel – 01483 416210 for details

Committee:

President	John Blake Tel: 01444 482414
Chairman & Training Officer:	Gary Moore Tel: 01444 239961
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

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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/>

