

## **SOUTH OF ENGLAND HEDGE LAYING SOCIETY**

Reg Charity No 1046124



**October 2012**

### **MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN**

Hi everyone and welcome to a new season. Sorry I could not get to the first Training Day but rest assured I will be there for the rest of the season.

I'd like to see good clean cutting, so make sure your tools are sharp. Sharp tools make laying a lot easier.

Anyone not cutting this season can still get involved with the society activities. There is always work to do so come and have a chat, a cup of tea and give us a hand.

Good cutting to all and enjoy it. Bye for now.

Gary

Hi Everybody,

As I write this Hurricane Sandy is about to hit the East Coast of America. Fingers crossed it doesn't turn right!! Bill Hook's piece on page 4 will remind you of our ventures into the world of hurricanes back in 1987.

Well the new season is under way and already one Training Day under our belts. Do get involved in all that is going on in the next few months. As Gary says, help is always needed so if you can assist in any way please give one of the Committee Members a call – phone numbers at the back - or even better go to one of the events – don't forget your wellies!!!

As this is the last Newsletter in 2012, may I wish you a Happy Christmas and all the best for 2013.

Rachel

## **SEHLS ANNUAL COMPETITION**

**Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2013**

**Donnington, Near Chichester**

**More details and application form in next Newsletter – just after Christmas.**

**Meanwhile, give Jim Vantassel (01483 416210) a call if you want more info.**

**➤ ITEMS FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER TO RACHEL BY MID-DECEMBER PLEASE <**

# TRAINING

## FROGMAN'S TRAINING DAY!!

The weather for the first Training Day was, to say the least, inclement. Only four wheel drives got you to the hedge and that was after the long winding trail of Western Front proportions through the mud. We had a slow start due to the fact that Gary was not there to crack the whip and get us to work! He was representing us in Scotland along with Phil Hart (who won at the last bash up there). I have yet to hear how they did. The hedge got laid, we had a little sunshine, several cups of tea and for lunch Jim and Rachel brought soup and bread over the mud and water of the field, – very welcome! Thanks to both of you.

The second Training Day is also at Colbran's Farm on 17<sup>th</sup> November. Let's hope it is as good a day as the first.

Mike Parrott  
Training Day Secretary

## TOOL SHARPENING DAY

Early birds catch a bacon sandwich....

The early arrivals at the tools sharpening session had the opportunity of a bacon sandwich before settling into the realms of all things sharp with Chairman, Gary Moore.

With files, oil stones, diamond stones, whet stones, Japanese water stones, grinders n flappy discs, a sit down - pump it with your left foot, sandstone wheel and slate to rub over cherished tools, the hedges will not stand a chance this season.

7 people attended with a wide array of tools.

After a talk and demonstrations from Gary, everyone settled into getting rid of shoulders and honing to a fine edge, getting their tools ready for the coming season.

Let's hope fine edges can be turned into fine hedges.

Phil Hart



## NATURE NOTES

I have been reading a book written by a man from Ditchling a century ago. His knowledge and observations of birdlife in the district were extremely good and he wrote in a most interesting way. The thing that struck me was how accurate he was with the descriptions of birds, how to find nests, which were plentiful and which more scarce. There were Wheatears breeding in rabbit holes on the Downs, a species not found locally now but one I can remember in the early 1950's similarly at Amberley Mount. By seeing dead bumble bees and mice impaled on thorns he was able to find the nest of a Red-backed Shrike and in one orchard found the nests of three Wrynecks. Each of these species no longer breeds in the south-east. The only time we are likely to see them is during the migration period of spring or autumn.

Probably his most startling record was of a brood of Corncrakes he saw on the Downs and his comment on how dark and similar to those of a Moorhen the chicks were. Of Moorhens he wrote of using their eggs for custard!

He describes a Cirl Bunting with very good notes on its difference from a Yellowhammer. Cirl Buntings bred in Sussex until the 1970's but are now confined to the South-West. He commented on the increase in Goldfinch numbers as a result of their ban on capture as cage-birds



He mentions Kestrel and Sparrowhawk as birds of prey. The now common sightings of Buzzard and Red Kite would have been unimaginable in those days. He describes what were hung up on the gibbets of the local gamekeeper, species that would nowadays horrify us, Barn Owl, Kestrel and a Hen Harrier that were shot on the Downs. This was fascinating writing giving such a valuable record of what was in the countryside then and now.

There is no question that this has been a very poor and difficult season for the migrant summer visiting birds. Normally by early August, good numbers of the commoner Warblers are to be seen catching insects in shrubberies and fruit trees. Always active, they dash and hover in pursuit of their food. Perhaps, as they arrived later than usual they may extend the breeding season and we will see them later in the month.

The Swallows that returned, though lower in numbers, have brought off many good broods of five young and are now well advanced in rearing their second families. The successful first brood birds will have departed from the nesting areas so that there is no competition for food with the later young. We checked the House Martins' nests very carefully making sure that we counted only those occupied by the rightful owners and found a minimum of forty-three which compares closely with last year. Interestingly, eight had been built on the new part of the college and there is plenty of room for many more. Almost as many had the entrance holes enlarged and had tell-tail straw protruding indicating that they had been taken over by House Sparrows that are supposed to be so scarce! One had also been used by a Wren.

The resident species have fared better in our experience with the young of the Tit species, Robin, Wren, Blackbird, Treecreeper and Pied Wagtail thriving locally. Of the top predators, ten Barn Owl young were ringed in six boxes with four of them having only a single chick. Though there appears to be plenty of voles about (their main prey) some of these boxes were only a few hundred yards apart making for competition for food. Had there been fewer pairs using the nest boxes there might have been larger broods but the same number of young in total over the district.

Kestrels also bred well and there are young out in the locality. From the Upper Mill where there has been for three generations, lighter coloured birds. Look out for an almost white female hunting over the southern part of the Parish. She could confuse someone into reporting something rare!

The BTO website "Tracking Cuckoos into Africa" is fascinating. Not only has it proved that some of the male Cuckoos spend just seven weeks in Britain but that some of them are well into Africa by mid-July. Each has its own map showing its journey and if you use the slide on the left side of the map, the habitat where the bird is, is revealed right down to the row of trees or river bank.

Reg Lanaway

# HEDGE RAMBLINGS

## DIDN'T IT BLOW

It's October 16<sup>th</sup>, and I am sitting here in my study, looking across the field at a stump of an old oak that before it was blown over was said by locals to be 200 years old. Today it would have been 225 years old for it is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of what came to be known as 'The Hurricane'. Some meteorologists actually claim that it was not a hurricane but that is as it may be. It wrecked havoc across the south of England during that night in October 1987. Huge swathes of trees were blown down during that night and many will remember vividly the early hours. It was probably a night when many people thought the end of the world was nigh as terrifying bursts threatened to lift the roofs off houses right across southern England. 19 people lost their lives and whilst this was tragic, it was probably miraculously a low total, probably due to most of us being tucked up in bed or pacing the floor boards wondering whether we should make another cup of tea because for us Brits tea and sympathy heals all unfortunate circumstances. That is, of course, if there was enough power for those who relied entirely on electricity to make a brew.

Roads were blocked by fallen trees and many train services were disrupted by what would probably have been the wrong type of tree on the line. Cars were crushed by fallen trees, bus shelters blown over, power lines brought down and services disrupted for days on end. All over the area the buzz of chainsaws was heard in the huge clear-up operation. A friend of mine who was working for Southern Electric at the time, recounts the story of the Board purchasing at short notice 100 chainsaws which were hurriedly handed out as part of the clear-up operation but failed to keep a list of those that had them and needless to say, many were never returned and lost for ever.

Bill Hook



### Bed & Breakfast near Grimsby

Recommended by some of our members competing in the National Championship. They say – very clean, spacious, well equipped and landlady very welcoming.

The Rookery Guest House  
Railway Street  
Barnetby-le-Wold  
North Lincolnshire DN38 6DJ

Tel: 01652 688473  
Mobile: 07765 343738  
Web: [www.rookeryfarmguesthouse.co.uk](http://www.rookeryfarmguesthouse.co.uk)

### BLACK POPLAR REGENERATION SCHEME

There are only 33 mature Black Poplar trees left in Sussex. Wakehurst Place in conjunction with the RHS Wisley are operating a Black Poplar Regeneration Scheme through the Sussex Otters & Rivers Partnership. **FREE TREES** are on offer if you have some suitable wet ground.

Contact: Fran Southgate to discuss.

E-mail: [fransouthgate@sussexwt.org.uk](mailto:fransouthgate@sussexwt.org.uk)  
Tel: 01273 497555/Mob: 07825 797520  
Web: [sussexotters.org](http://sussexotters.org)

Sussex Otters & River Project  
c/o Sussex Wildlife Trust  
Woods Mill, Henfield  
West Sussex BN5 9SD

## COMPETITION RESULTS ROUNDUP AUTUMN 2012

### Laughton, Open Class

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	Number of competitors
<b>Competitor</b>	Paul Matthews	Bob Whitaker	Michael Bentley	Gary Moore	Clive Gilligan	12
<b>Style</b>	South of England					

11 Cutters cutting with hand tools only, Best Axe work Bob Whitaker.

### West Grinstead, Open Class

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	Number of competitors
<b>Competitor</b>	Paul Matthews	Bob Whitaker	Gary Moore	Mark Hudson		10
<b>Style</b>	South of England					

**The Hurstpierpoint, Postponed, waterlogged pitch**, it may run at a later date.  
**Scottish National, Ancrun, Jedburgh. Oct 2012**

### Open Class

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	Number of competitors
<b>Competitor</b>	Clive Matthew	Peter Gibson	Bob Bell	Gary Moore	Henry Kirkwood	15
<b>Style</b>	Midland	Lancashire & Westmoreland		South of England	Lancashire & Westmoreland	

### Novice Class

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>		Number of competitors
<b>Competitor</b>	Jack Carradice	Graeme Walker	John Gibson	Michael Todd		5
<b>Style</b>	Lancashire & Westmoreland	Midland	Lancashire & Westmoreland			

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> North East Hedge Laying Competition, Northumberland. Oct 2012

#### Open Class

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>		Number of competitors
<b>Competitor</b>	Clive Matthew	Jasper Prachet	Gary Moore	Peter Gibson		10
<b>Style</b>	Midland	Derby	Derby	Lancashire & Westmoreland		

#### Novice Class

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>		Number of competitors
<b>Competitor</b>	Alan Wilson	Craig Proctor	Stan Pinkney	Michael Todd		13

### Ladies Class

**First Place, Karen Humble winner, 3 competitors.**

**South of England Style at The National Championship, Grimsby 27<sup>th</sup> Oct 2012**  
**Open Class**

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>			Number of competitors
<b>Competitor</b>	Paul Matthews	Gary Moore	Tony Gallows			6
<b>Style</b>	South of England					

**Intermediate Class**

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>			Number of competitors
<b>Competitor</b>	Phil Hart	Geoff Pitt	Michael Bentley			
<b>Style</b>	South of England					

**Veteran Class**

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>		Number of competitors
<b>Competitor</b>	Ron Moulard	Roger Taylor	Dave Truran	Clive Gilligan		4
<b>Style</b>	South of England					

**The South of England Hedge Laying Society Points Trophy**

Competitor	Laughton	West Grinstead	Hurstpierpoint	Points	Current Position
<b>Bob Whitaker</b>	9	9	-	18	2
<b>Gary Moore</b>	7	8	-	15	3
<b>Dave Truran</b>	4	5	-	9	6
<b>Ron Moulard</b>	2	5	-	7	7
<b>Michael Bentley</b>	8	3	-	11	5
<b>Paul Matthews</b>	10	10	-	20	1
<b>Clive Gilligan</b>	6	6	-	12	4
<b>Roger Taylor</b>	3	4	-	7	7
<b>Mark Hudson</b>	-	7		7	7

## MEMBERSHIP

**SECRETARY:** After over 20 years as Membership Secretary, Dick Morley has decided to stand down at the AGM in February 2013. Thank you Dick for all you have done for the Society over many many years and very best wishes for the future. Your hard work has been much appreciated.

This, of course, means that the Society needs a new Membership Secretary. If you feel this is something you could do please give Dick a call (01273 843633) for more details of what is involved. This is a good way for a non-layer to get involved in the Society.

**MEMBERSHIP CARDS:** Please note, new membership cards will not be issued until April 2013 so hold on to your 2011/12 cards.

## THE SONG OF THE CHAINSAW

Oh, the old Sussex songs by Hilaire Belloc much  
loved

You never can 'ear 'em no more.

No, you never can 'ear 'em.

You never can 'ear 'em.

You never can 'ear 'em, no more.

But still sung they are, full lustily, throat-sore  
By the hedgelayers, whilst laying and threshin'.  
But you never can 'ear 'em (some say it's a blessin')

You never can 'ear 'em no more.

For in the world of sonority,  
Throughout the cosmology,  
The petrol engine is law.

And you can never quire 'ear 'em.  
(You'd not want to be near 'em.  
On account of the chainsaw's roar.

Ian Runcie



**... and the season's  
only just begun. Must be  
your age, Gary!!**

Send in your captions for  
printing in the next Newsletter.



<b>2012</b>		
<b>November</b>	15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Committee Meeting</b>
	17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Training Day – Laughton, East Sussex</b>
<b>December</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Coppicing – Venue to be announced</b>
	8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Training Day – Chichester, West Sussex</b>
<b>2013</b>		
<b>January</b>	5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Coppicing – Venue to be announced</b>
	10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Committee Meeting</b>
	12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Improver's Day – Chichester, West Sussex</b>
<b>February</b>	15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Annual General Meeting, Plumpton College</b>
	23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> SEHLS Annual Competition – Chichester, West Sussex</b>
<b>March</b>	16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Charity Hedglaying Day (Bi-annual event) – Ansty, East Sussex</b>
	21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Committee Meeting</b>

## 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/>**