**South of England Hedge-Laying Society**

**A GUIDE TO TRIMMING AND MAINTAINING RE-GROWTH OF A LAID HEDGE**

INTRODUCTION.   
Many people comment on the neat appearance of a laid hedge when the hedge-layers themselves have completed their work and the site has been tidied. Few realise that this initial appearance is not retained unless the minimum of annual maintenance is undertaken. It is for this reason that the Society has produced this leaflet to encourage hedge-owners and others in the practical aftercare of a laid hedge.

FIRST YEAR.   
In the late summer or autumn of the year following laying we suggest that the hedge is given a light side trim. If it is necessary for the hedge to gain height, no trimming of the top should take place at this stage. This will be particularly beneficial as the new shoots from the stools or stumps at ground level will have an opportunity to thicken out. If possible it would be of additional benefit to trim nettles, weeds and grass from the base of the hedge, to enable light, air and water to enter and so encourage the new growth to sprout from the hedge bottom. It is important to keep stock from within 2/3yards of the hedge, during this first year, as animals are very partial to eating the new growth, especially horses and sheep.

SECOND YEAR.   
If there has been good re-growth then the hedge will probably benefit from two side-trims in the second year after laying. The first of these should be in late spring (late May) and the second in early autumn, and this could include a top trim to the required height which will help the thickening of the whole hedge. At this stage it is not quite so important to keep stock away, as the new growth from the “stools” (which is of course the new hedge) will have grown up through the layers quite strongly. For the same reason it is not so important to trim out the hedge bottom, although it will look tidier if done.

SUBSEQUENT YEARS   
Yearly or twice-yearly trims should be done, together with the cutting out of briars, brambles and ivy, which can impede re-growth if allowed to become dominant.

CONCLUSION   
There is a danger that the above advice could be considered a counsel of perfection” when we all know that many factors, such as weather, soil type etc can all affect the amount and type of re-growth. These guidelines are designed to encourage good maintenance of a laid hedge, so keeping it a tidy, stock-proof weather shelter for many years.

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