



**NATIONAL HEDGE LAYING SOCIETY
INTRODUCTION TO HEDGE LAYING
TRAINING COURSE AND
ASSESSMENT**



**THE PRINCE'S
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FUND**



ABOUT HEDGELAYING

The demand for accrediting the craft of hedge laying is increasing. A traditionally laid and sensitively managed hedge allows farming and conservation interests to meet; for the farmer a natural barrier to confine and shelter stock is erected, whilst for the conservationist, a wildlife habitat is created. Government commitment to hedgerow protection was included in the 1990 Environment White Paper, and appropriate legislation is included in the Environment Bill. Hedgerow protection, and encouragement for new hedge planting and management through Environmental and Countryside Stewardship Schemes has led to an increased call for hedge laying and traditional craft skills. The demand for hedge laying craft is no longer confined to agriculture; private estates, parks and other public areas, nature reserves, schools and gardens are increasingly employing this traditional skill.

Where to get help and guidance

To apply for an “Introduction to Hedgelaying” training course please contact the National Hedgelaying Society Secretary who will put you in touch with your local hedgelaying Group and offer information on training courses taking place at locations throughout the country .

Further information on Hedgelaying, technical workbooks and training course dates are available on the Society’s website www.hedgelaying.org.uk.

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INTRODUCTION TO HEDGELAYING TRAINING COURSE

Overview in brief

The National Hedgelaying Society offers training and assessment in hedgerow management. This training course is designed to provide beginners with the basic knowledge and skills needed to carry out the traditional craft of Hedgelaying.

The course will cover:

- Hedge laying styles
- Biodiversity value
- Historic landscape value
- Health and safety
- Tools
- Hedgerow legislation and classification
- Preparations at the hedge
- Cutting and pleaching
- Building the hedge
- Staking, binding, crooks, stake and rail
- Trimming and finishing
- Hedge aftercare

Safety code of practice

- Any tools, equipment and facilities to be used during the course must comply with safety regulations and are safe to use
- Only safe working practices are to be demonstrated
- A site-specific risk assessment is carried out prior to the start of the course

Assessment

The course offers an optional assessment of the basic hedgelaying skills learnt on the course. This basic level assessment is completed as part of a beginner training course. An assessment certificate confirming the standard achieved at the beginner training course will be awarded for candidates that attain a pass level. This is a stand-alone assessment and does not form part of the National Hedgelaying Society accreditation scheme. If you would like to increase your proficiency in hedgelaying or you are part of a traditional skills training programme, you can progress to the National Hedgelaying Society bronze accreditation by completing further training and assessment .

Candidates are assessed on their ability to complete basic hedgelaying skills detailed below.

Candidates must achieve 50% of the points in every section and a minimum of 50% overall to pass the assessment. Where a candidate fails to achieve the marks required to pass the assessment, assessors will clearly indicate areas for improvement to the candidate.

Candidates should ensure their attire and conduct throughout the assessment are in the best interests of their safety and the safety of others on the site. Appropriate PPE must be worn. Everyone involved with assessments should behave in safe manner throughout.

What will I learn on the course and how will I be assessed?

The description below gives an overview of the elements that will be covered during the training and course assessment. Each element gives a description of the optimum standard of work for the assessment. More detailed information is available in the 'Hedgelaying technical guide' available from the National Hedgelaying Society.

1. Pleach .

- a) Starting the cut at the correct height for the size of the stem.
- b) Not cutting in sharply and then splitting stem downwards in a long tongue.
- c) Thinning the pleach down in an even manner with no kicking back into an open mouth
- d) Smooth finish to the cut with no 'hacking'

2. Heel

- a) All heels taken off
- b) Heel taken of low to the ground
- c) The cut sloping away from the pleacher (varies from style to style)
- d) Smoothness of cut with no damage to the bark below.

3. Stakes, crooks and binders

Stakes-

- a) Stakes chosen suitable for the style and of correct quality.
- b) Stakes sharpened at the thick end and placed thick end in the ground.
- c) Stakes in a uniform pattern, at the correct angle and trimmed to the correct height above the binders.
- d) Stakes forming as straight a line as possible within the hedge as dictated by the style. Correctly and evenly spaced.

Binders

- a) Started at the correct end and woven in the correct manner for the style.
- b) Finished height level and correct.

- c) Binders inserted behind each stake correctly and not protruding.
- d) Not cracked or damaged during the trimming of the stakes.

4 . Appearance - true to style

Guidance sheets on each of the regional styles is available from the National Hedgelaying Society.

- a) The finished height and width of hedge generally even and true to style.
- b) Bindings, if used, running generally level with correct placement within the stakes.
- c) Stakes or crooks placed well, at correct angle, firm and holding the hedge well.
- d) Styles with a back of hedge: Even brash along the back of the hedge showing few holes. Adequate 'flying brush 'for appropriate styles. Styles where hedge is same on both sides: Even finish with both sides matching and built to a high standard.
- e) Overall appearance, balanced, neat and well built.

5. Tools

Correct use of tools. Knowledge of tool care.

6. Questions and Answers -

Be able to explain the basic principles of hedgelaying, reasons for the style, and how to maintain the hedge once it has been laid.

7. Health and safety

- a) Work area safe and clear of brash.
- b) Correct PPE.
- c) Awareness of possible risks.
- d) Good hand eye co-ordination and safe working practices.
- e) Demonstrate good working practice.

Marking the Assessment

	Introduction to Hedgelaying Assessment	points	Min
1	Pleach	20	10
2	Heel	20	10
3	Stake /crooks/ Binders	20	10
4	Appearance (True to style)	30	15
5	Tool Use and care	10	5
6	Questions and answers	10	5
7	Health and safety	20	10
	Total points possible	130	65

Please note : if any section is marked below the minimum mark required, this constitutes an overall failure for the whole Assessment,

even if the total marks achieved exceed the minimum overall mark required for the Assessment.