

£2.50



# NATIONAL HEDGELAYING SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

*Preserving the past, protecting the future*

**SUMMER 2023**

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## FROM THE EDITOR

It's a good time of the year, when holidays might be around the corner, the summer weather allows a clear up in the shed and the view shifts forwards to a new cutting season and the Nationals on Saturday October 28. As such we have a feature on tool sharpening and another on how to prepare for your first competition. All details of how to enter the Nationals are elsewhere in this issue plus raffle tickets to enter if you are feeling lucky. We are looking to make some changes to the newsletter but more will be revealed as a plan is developed and signed off by the Committee. Have a lovely summer.

*Richard Lofthouse*



The NHLS Secretary is very fortunate to have two hedgehogs visit his garden rummaging through his strawberry bed eating slugs...

...and/or strawberries.



*The cover photo, taken by Tim Russ, shows Guy Lock officiating at the 2022 National Championship*

*Readers are reminded that views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and are not necessarily the policies of the NHLS*

## FROM THE NHLS CHAIR

After the disappointment of having to cancel this year's competition in the north we have found what I believe to be a really good site in the Midlands at Stanford Hall in Leicestershire. Arrangements are now moving along at a pace.

The hedges are some of the best that we have had to cut for some years so, come on, get your entries in and let's have a great competition.

At the AGM we had a few minor changes in officials and these people are finding their way in their new jobs. Sadly, our Development Officer left the Society early in August as things were not working out as we had planned. We wish Graham good luck in the future.

Planning has started for a replacement but with a slightly different job description more suited to the NHLS as an organisation

We are still working on the new website. It's taking a little longer than first envisaged but hopefully when we do launch it the team will have got it right, so thanks to the team building it, and for all your time on this big project.

The NHLS display stand continues to go around the shows under the management of our secretary David Whitaker and his wife Carol. David is always looking for ways to improve the display so some changes have been made this year. If you see the stand at a show please go and say hello to those running it. People always admire the display and say how wonderful it is. Thanks to David and Carol for all the time and effort that they put into it throughout the year – not just on show days.

Requests for training continue to come in so if you are holding a training course please put it on the website so we can direct enquiries to your event. Also, requests for accreditation continue so please send these to [training@hedgelaying.org.uk](mailto:training@hedgelaying.org.uk) and then we can book them on to an assessment day. At present the list stands at 45 awaiting an assessment for this coming season.

The interest in hedgerows has, in my opinion, never been at such a high level, talking about climate change, carbon capture, conservation and nature recovery.

But just one observation from your Chair: the aims of some people who set the targets to be achieved are totally unrealistic – there are just not the craftspeople to carry out the work. What is the point in planting if you fail to manage? In my opinion there are already miles of unmanaged hedgerows out there as well as some that are over-managed.

I know that all you cutters will be itching to get started on a new season and dare I say it get some practise in before the end of October.

Looking forward to meeting you all then.

*Joe Craig*



## GROUNDSWELL FESTIVAL

28<sup>TH</sup> - 29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2023

*David Whitaker*

Groundswell is a practical show on “Regenerative Farming”. It is aimed at anyone who wants to understand the farmer’s core asset, the soil, and make better informed decisions. It is a two-day event featuring talks, forums and discussions from leading international soil health experts, experienced arable and livestock farmers, agricultural policy experts, direct-drill demonstrations and AgTech innovators. With wide appeal across the food and farming spectrum, Groundswell is relevant for conventional, organic, livestock, arable, land-owners or tenant farmers. With a big emphasis on helping wildlife.

The event was founded by the Cherry family on their mixed farm in Hertfordshire. John and Paul Cherry have farmed for thirty one years. Groundswell Agriculture hosts the annual Groundswell Festival alongside other outreach events to share the science and latest information on regenerative agriculture, helping to encourage soil focused, productive farming practices, and to extend knowledge and support those who are on the regenerative journey.

The NHLS took the display trailer of Bonsai hedges to promote...

### LIFE ON THE HEDGE

The “Life on the Hedge” programme is helping the nation achieve bigger, healthier, better connected hedgerows. It is doing this by gathering and sharing knowledge in order to improve hedgerow management, improve supplies of future hedgerow trees through community tree nurseries, and by engaging the public with the importance of the country’s wonderful hedgerows through national hedgerow week! The project partners include the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), the People’s Trust for Endangered Species (PTES), the National Hedgelaying Society and “Another Way”. The project is funded by DEFRA’s Trees Call to Action Fund developed with the Forestry Commission and delivered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

### NHLS Participation

With the bonsai hedges drawing in the crowds there was a tremendous response to our stand with hedgerow planting, management and laying being very popular amongst the visitors.

The crew in the photo manned the stand with Dean Dyer also lending a hand on both days of the event.



*Will Fitzpatrick (Tree Council), Andrew Crow, Annie Heslop (TC), Megan Gimber & Pip (PTES), Clare Bowen (TC), David Whitaker*



*Megan Gimber was one of the hosts of a guided talk on “The Importance of Hedgerows”. Over 150 people took part in the activity.*

The show itself was a most enjoyable event and a true “agricultural show” to boot – no double glazing and not a hot tub in sight! It carried on into the evening and lived up to the “festival” billing with lots of music, food and a few beverages on hand.

We had a most constructive time working with Annie, Will, Megan, Clare and hope to work with them in the future. They have a lot to offer and great passion to promote hedges.

I would go so far to say that, if I had to choose only one show to go to every year, this would be the one I would pick!



### The Game Fair

The NHLS had its traditional stand at the Ragley Hall Game Fair on 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> July.

*Report to follow in the next Newsletter...*

## HOW TO SHARPEN YOUR TOOLS \*

*Iain White*

### Billhooks

The definition of a sharp edge is the intersection of two polished surfaces, and the common phrase used to define a really sharp edge is 'razor sharp'. This article will cover how to achieve an edge on your billhook that is as 'sharp as a razor'.

There are three key factors that are important when creating an edge on a billhook to make it effective in use. These are surface finish, edge geometry and metallurgy.

**Metallurgy:** this is clearly within the control of the person that made the tool, but the reason we must be aware of it is that inappropriate use of a high speed grinder when sharpening the blade can alter the metallurgy, and ruin the tool. Billhook blades are made from high-carbon steel and after initial forging to create the shape, the billhook blade goes through two heat treatment processes. The first is hardening to ensure that the blade is hard enough to maintain its' edge, then tempering to ensure that it is tough enough not to deform in use. Hardening is done first by heating and quenching, tempering then follows, which is done by heating to a specific temperature and cooling slowly in a controlled manner. These processes alter the grain of the steel for the life of the blade, provided it is not heated again. If a high-speed grinder is used for sharpening and the blade edge gets hot enough to discolour, then the metallurgy is altered and the blade can be wrecked – be warned!

**Edge geometry:** this is the first thing that must be created. A billhook is a slicing tool, therefore the blade angles must be fine so the blade does not jam in the wood. An included angle, ie: the overall angle from one face to the other, of, about 15 degrees (20 degrees max.) is appropriate. A billhook works best when there is just one equal angle created on each face not like the familiar sharpening of a domestic kitchen knife. It is typical with old, neglected tools, and surprisingly, regrettably, with some brand-new tools, to have to create the correct angle. Problems occur if the blade angles are too steep and there are 'shoulders' that must be removed to create the desired 15 degree angle. Unless you have access to a belt grinder, the safest way to do this is to use a file. To save time you should aim to use the coarsest file possible (known as a Bastard Cut) to remove metal quickly. This will leave a rough finish on the steel which can then be refined with the next two grades of file, known as 2nd Cut, and Fine respectively. A half round file is best for the curved section of the blade. A coarse file removes metal more quickly, the finer files will then improve the surface finish. Ideally you should clamp the blade in a vice. I use a G-clamp held in a vice to hold the blade horizontally which facilitates easy filing. Remember to always file away from the edge to avoid cutting yourself- not that you need reminding!



**Surface finish:** the final stage of the process is to create a polished finish on your blade which now has the correct angles. This can be done using oil stones, water stones, which cut more aggressively, or wet and dry paper. There is no right answer here, but, you should develop a system that you are comfortable with and stick to it. Once a blade is sharp, it should only take a minute or two to re-sharpen after each use. My recommendation is to use successive grades of wet and dry paper, because they are more user-friendly. It is critical to work through the grades, as each one just polishes out the scratches from the previous grade of paper, until you have a fine finish. The time spent on each grade is very short. I either hold or glue the paper to a flat piece of wood or MDF, for the straight parts of the blade, and paper held around or glued to a short (about 12 inch) length of 40mm plastic plumbing waste pipe (or use dowel) for the curved parts of the blade. The number rating on the paper gets larger as the paper gets finer, so you start with 240 grit and progress through 320/400/600 etc. to 2000. It is possible to find pre-glued paper to make life easier. You can do a final honing with metal polish on a piece of wood, or a strip of leather i.e. an old belt glued to wood. Remember that you must always use paper and honing polish AWAY from the sharp edge or the blade will dig in to the paper, or worse, your hand.

Now that you have a beautifully shaped blade with a finely polished finish making it 'razor sharp' you MUST protect it immediately with some oil. Without oil, your wonderful blade surface will start to oxidise, which is the technical term for rust. The rust is too small to be seen with the naked eye, but will chemically reduce the sharpness. Use 3-in-one oil, gun oil or even engine oil, all will give you the protection necessary to keep the blade in top condition. Don't use vegetable oil out of the kitchen as these are all hygroscopic and will attract water. The final word is a plea to look after your files. These are the cutting tools that you expect to cut through high carbon steel, so need to be well looked after, in the same way as your precious billhook. This means either hang them up, or wrap them separately so they do not touch anything else. Files that rattle around in a drawer together will soon be blunt and useless.

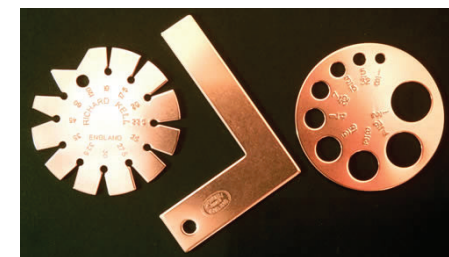
Recommendations for suppliers for sharpening equipment are below:

**Files:** Vallorbe engineer's files, half round, 250mm long, Bastard Cut, Second Cut, Fine, plus handles. All available from [axminstertools.com](http://axminstertools.com)

**Bevel Gauge:** Beautiful brass gauge to check the angle of the blade (right). Available from [richardkell.co.uk](http://richardkell.co.uk)

**Wet and Dry paper** – sets of various grades from 240-2000 grit. Available from Amazon, Screwfix etc.

**Honing polish:** for final honing of the blade, Tormek PA-70, also available from Axminster tools



*\*This article was originally published in an earlier draft in the South of England Hedgelaying Society newsletter.*

## FURTHER NOTES ON SHARPENING YOUR BILLHOOK

Iain's made a central point that almost no one outside hedgelaying understands, about the fact that the billhook is a slicing tool and quite unlike a kitchen knife or most penknives and bushcraft fixed blade knives. I had to learn this the hard way when I started out a few years ago hedgelaying. I bought a nice Elwell 10 inch on eBay but it wasn't. The blade had been replaced and wasn't stamped. The blade had a sharp edge but huge shoulders. It was very heavy and it was frankly awful. I could not understand why it wouldn't cut well despite a long time spent sharpening the 'blade'. I then met by chance the legendary Sussex coppicer Alan Waters who laughed and said it needed to be ground down. This is principally what Iain has written about. But I didn't come to a full understanding of what that meant until I attended Sean Hellman's tool sharpening day at last year's annual National Coppice Federation get together in Dorset, attended by a few of us from the NHLS. Basically it took me all day to sort out the billhook, and I was flabbergasted. I used a cordless angle grinder, with the bill hook in a bench vice. I found this to work very well but even then, there was a lot of material to remove and as Iain has said, if the metal 'blues' from heat then well done you've wrecked it. So a bucket of water was to hand you have to repeatedly stop and cool it off with a sprinkle. The process is pretty physical. It's a whole body exercise. You don't get anywhere by being too timid. It was almost like modern blacksmithing. In this case the cutting edge was also pitted and damaged, no doubt from hitting stones or barbed wire or detritus. So we were re-setting that whole cutting blade and then also taking the shoulders back to create a new, slender angle. About five hours later I had the basis for final sharpening and stropping. Since then it's been a joy to use.



A final note. I have attended twice a 'knife sharpening course' at the Japan Knife Centre in Baker Street, London. That opened me up to a whole Japanese world of vocabulary and exquisite chef knives – and yet the two instructors took quite different approaches even within that tradition and the polishing water stones we used went down to the fantastically fine grit count of 40,000. These cost hundreds of pounds and you would use them on a sushi knife but not a billhook. At the opposite extreme I got an Axminster Tool promotional today for a four Grit diamond hone for £9.98, the four different grit sizes 120, 180, 240 and 320. If we go back to the Japanese tradition, those grit counts would be far too coarse. We started at 1000 with the Japanese knife and then 6000 and then 12000, 40000. 40000 is show-off territory. You don't really need that. If we go back to Sean Hellman and his book *Sharp* – well it is rather remarkable running to hundreds of pages covering hundreds of tools and blades. What I am trying to say: each and every tool is different, the global universe of knives is simply vast, each country has similar but different techniques and vocabularies. It is overwhelming. But once you have found the method you prefer for the tools you use, stick to it and that's the end of the matter. Either it works or it doesn't. Once you start laying the hedge or cleaning hazel rods, you know within a few seconds of use.

*Richard Lofthouse*

## YOUR FIRST COMPETITION!

*According to Tony Wilsdon...*

Hedgelaying competitions are usually enjoyable and a very good way to improve your skills quickly but they are hard work. For those that have some knowledge or have done a course on hedgelaying here is my quick guide to competing on the first occasion:

- Firstly read the rules – there probably won't be any surprises but read them anyway.
- Enter the best category for yourself.
- The day before a competition make sure all your tools are sharp and chainsaw is fuelled up and ready to go.
- Put a full spare set of clothes in the car, because if it is wet you will need them when finished.
- Arrive in good time and inspect the hedge, you will see one section that is gappy, full of briars and horrible old dead pleachers, this will be the section that you will draw, just do your best.
- Check which way you are laying, don't take the word of the competitor next to you because he is probably an idiot. Instead have a word with a steward, which way does the brush go? Where does the brash go?
- Be ready to start, prepare all your tools close to the hedge.
- Inspect your stakes and binders, if there is not enough or they are poor quality see if you can get more or replace them now because when you near the end of time all the spare stakes will have been pilfered by other competitors.
- When it is time to start don't hang around chatting, making a good start is so important, you may need to be a bit brutal with the hedge to start but get it down.
- Keep a good eye on the time and make time to stand back and have a look at your work.
- When friends and onlookers come for a chat be friendly, a few quick words but then tell them to go away.
- Don't be afraid to ask any advice from fellow competitors.
- Have plenty to drink but preferably not whisky.
- Sometime during the day a smart old boy will probably wander along, try to be nice to him, as this is probably the judge, you can see if he accepts bribes but that is usually unlikely.
- Another man will walk past and tell you how his father was a hedgelayer but he would never had used a chainsaw, best to just nod and agree then explain that you must get on.
- After finishing make sure everything is clear in front of the hedge, remember that the Judge is probably quite old with bad eyesight so if he falls over an exposed stump you may well be penalised.
- Stand back, eat, drink and have a look at the other competitors work.
- Wait for prize giving, and don't expect anything and remember that the judge's decision is final so just accept it and have a look at the winner's piece and try and see why it is better than the rest.
- Ask yourself why the hell you do it and then look forward to the next competition.

*Good luck!*

## BRITAIN'S HEDGES NEED TO GROW UP! - THE MOVIE



The 2022 Summer edition of the Newsletter contained an article by Colin Clutterbuck about hedgerow management and a detailed description of a new combined trimming/coppicing method.

There is now a professionally produced video on YouTube which explains the hedge management scheme proposed by Colin and practised by George Steer on his farm in the Tamar Valley. Filmed by Colin's brother, a professional video maker, it stars Colin and George, and was filmed on George's farm.

Rob Wolton, a long time proponent of woodfuel from hedges, also contributes to the film.

The best way to find the video is to call up YouTube and search for "two-tier hedge trimming".



George Bosnyak

The driving force behind our presence at 2023 Shows – Secretary David Whitaker at the Game Fair

## THE 44<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL HEDGELAYING CHAMPIONSHIP



SATURDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023

STANFORD HALL, LUTTERWORTH. LE17 6DH

BY KIND PERMISSION OF MR NICK FOTHERGILL



We are fortunate to have found such a good location at short notice after the Penrith site originally planned became unavailable. Stanford Hall has perfect hedges for the competition, a friendly and enthusiastic host in Nick Fothergill, and is conveniently located in the heart of the country.

In fact, the hedges are so ideal for the competition we have decided to add a new special award to the Championship...

### "Best Work Using Hand Tools Only"

There will be a **£100 prize** for the competitor judged to have done the best work using only billhook, axe, handsaw etc. In other words, no use of a chainsaw, and that means not electric (they're still chainsaws), not reciprocating, and not done by your mate on the length next door either. Cutters taking part and wishing to enter for this award should assess their length before the start of the competition and inform the judge *before starting cutting*. More details will be provided once your entry has been received.

### Prince's Countryside Fund/Rural Skills Hub Trainee Match

This year there will also be a match within the championship for hedgelayers who have recently benefited from a grant from either the PCF or RSH towards their hedgelaying training. It will be suitable for cutters from competent novice to intermediate in standard. Entrants will be allowed to cut in one of a number of regional styles in a section of adjacent lengths alongside the main competition.

There will be certificates and prize money (1<sup>st</sup>: £50, 2<sup>nd</sup>: £30, 3<sup>rd</sup>: £20) for the winners of the match.

## ADMISSION TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP

If you are coming to spectate at this year's Championship **bring this Newsletter!**

For this edition only, we have replaced the "Contacts" list normally on the back cover with an NHL's "MEMBER" sign. Display that on the dashboard of your vehicle and you will be granted free admission.

**It you don't, you will be charged the £5 public admission fee!**

Style	Scoring (100 points in total)
<b>Midland</b>	Cut and pleach .....35
	Stake and bind.....25
	Back of hedge .....20
	General appearance .....20
<b>Welsh</b>	Front and pleach .....25
	Back of hedge .....25
	True to style .....25
	Stake and top.....25
<b>Derby</b>	Cut and pleach .....35
	Stake and bind.....20
	Back of hedge .....20
	General appearance .....25
<b>South of England</b>	Cut and pleach .....35
	Stakes and binders.....35
	General appearance .....30
<b>Lancs &amp; Westmorland</b>	Choice of wood and distribution .....30
	Axe work .....25
	Stakes.....25
	Finish.....20
<b>Yorkshire</b>	Cut and pleach .....40
	Stake and rail.....40
	General appearance .....20
<b>Cheshire</b>	Cutting and pleaching.....35
	Build and appearance.....25
	Staking and fencing.....20
	Back of fence .....20
<b>Devon</b>	Quality of cutting, finish of stool, lack of splitting...40
	Selection and best use of crooks.....30
	Use of available material .....20
	General appearance and tidiness of site .....10
<b>North Somerset</b>	Heels and pleachers .....35
	Stake and firmness.....35
	General appearance .....30
<b>Dorset</b>	Cutting and laying, quality of cutting of stool, lack of splitting.....30
	Selection and best use of bonds.....30
	General appearance, quality of finished hedge, effectiveness as stock barrier, tidiness of site.....40

The prize money is the same in all classes: 1<sup>st</sup>: £100, 2<sup>nd</sup>: £70, 3<sup>rd</sup>: £50, 4<sup>th</sup>: £20  
 The Supreme Champion will receive a prize of £200  
 The Reserve Supreme Champion (2<sup>nd</sup> overall) will receive a prize of £100



The NHLS has a range of high quality, great value merchandise available. The price list below shows a selection of what is available. Shirts and jackets can be ordered in a variety of colours and size from S to 3XL. In addition, items can be customised with embroidered text front and/or back. For example, your style of hedgelaying or county.

**Merchandise Requests**

The Society would like to thank you for your purchases over the last year. If there is anything you can think of you might like us to try please do say.

- Rugby Shirt (Navy/Bottle Green) ..... £26.00
- Polo Shirt (Navy/Bottle Green/Maroon) ..... £18.75
- Fleece (Navy/Bottle Green/Maroon) ..... £28.00
- Gilet (Black/Bottle Green/Navy) ..... £25.00
- Beanie Hat (Navy/Bottle Green/Maroon)..... £8.00
- Baseball Cap (Navy/Bottle Green/Maroon) ..... £8.00
- Pin Badge..... £4.00
- Car Sticker ..... £1.00
- NHLS Tie ..... £5.00
- Vintage Canvas Dispatch Bag (to order) ..... £25.00



*Thank you to all who made purchases at the 2022 National Championship and over the last year.*



Order forms from:  
[merchandise@hedgelaying.org.uk](mailto:merchandise@hedgelaying.org.uk)



# 44<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL HEDGELAYING CHAMPIONSHIP

## SATURDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023

STANFORD HALL, LUTTERWORTH, LEICS. LE17 6DH

BY KIND PERMISSION OF MR NICK FOTHERGILL

### HEDGELAYING ENTRY FORM

Name -----

NHLS Membership No -----  
*In order to take part you must be a member of the NHLs. All details of membership are available on the NHLs web site: [www.hedgelaying.org.uk](http://www.hedgelaying.org.uk)*

Address -----  
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Telephone: -----  
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Mobile: -----  
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#### COMPETITION CLASS - Tick One Box\*

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Midland Open <input type="checkbox"/>         | Lancs & Westmorland Open <input type="checkbox"/>      | North Somerset Open <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Midland Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> | South of England Open <input type="checkbox"/>         | Devon Open <input type="checkbox"/>          |
| Welsh Open <input type="checkbox"/>           | South of England Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> | Derby Open* <input type="checkbox"/>         |
| Cheshire Open <input type="checkbox"/>        | South of England Veteran <input type="checkbox"/>      |  |
| Yorkshire Open <input type="checkbox"/>       | Dorset Open <input type="checkbox"/>                   |  |

*\* If you are entering the Derby class, please tick a second class as well. In the event of insufficient entries for the Derby class to take place you will be entered in your alternate choice of class and informed on the closing date for entries below.*

#### OTHER INFORMATION

*We require you to hold a current chainsaw certificate of competency or evidence of refresher training. Full safety equipment must be worn at all times when operating the chainsaw. Your attention is drawn to rule 16 of the competition.*

Date of Birth: -----  
Chainsaw Certificate No -----  
Next of Kin: -----  
Next of Kin Contact No. -----

Overdue NHLs Subscriptions **MUST** be paid before your entry will be accepted.

Signed ----- Date -----

*By signing this form, you confirm that you have read the competition rules, agree to be bound by them and satisfy the conditions of entry.*

*Return completed forms to:*

**NHLS Chief Steward, Worhams Farm, Shute, Axminster EX13 7QF**

**Closing Date for Entries: Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023**





Registered Charity No: 288850

# National Hedgelaying Society

www.hedgelaying.org.uk



August 2023

Dear Member

## National Hedgelaying Society Championship Raffle

Tickets £1 each, £5 per book

FIRST PRIZE £100 cash

LOTS and LOTS of other prizes

(Usually around 50 with the Net of Sprouts being the most talked about!)  
The Spirits, the Hampers, the Bottles of Wine not to mention many other delicious food items or craft items could be yours for just £1)

Will you be at Stanford Hall this October?

Our Annual Raffle will take place after the competition has been judged but if you are not there we will get your prize to you.

I have enclosed 3 Championship raffle books with this Newsletter, £15 worth of tickets. Can I please encourage you to buy/sell the enclosed tickets and return counterfoils before the National Hedgelaying Competition so that we can get a head start on the folding. I am also very grateful to those of you who prefer to send a donation towards the Competition Expenses rather than return the tickets. Do feel free to stick address labels on the counterfoils or if you are coming to the Competition just a name and telephone number would be sufficient.

Cheques (please don't send cash) should be made payable to The National Hedgelaying Society and should be returned along with the counterfoils to:

Mrs J A Crow, Fallowfield House, Bulby, Bourne, Lincs. PE10 0RU

If you would like to pay electronically (I still need the counterfoils!) the details are:  
Account name: The National Hedgelaying Society, Sort Code: 40-20-35, Account Number: 11375075. Please use Surname and 'Raffle' as a reference to identify your payment and pop a note in with the counterfoils to say when the payment was made.

If you would like more books or have any queries please contact me on 01778 591158 or 07800832763 or email [jenny.crow@btinternet.com](mailto:jenny.crow@btinternet.com) Please ensure anything is posted to arrive by Friday 20th October or, if you prefer, bring lots of money and counterfoils back on the day of the competition. I will cope!

If you are able to donate a prize it would be very much appreciated and if anyone is able to help sell tickets on the day of the competition I would be most grateful. You wouldn't have to commit to all day! Just let me know when you could help.

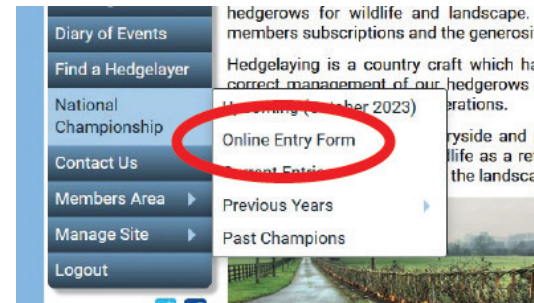
I look forward to meeting you all in Leicestershire this year.

Best wishes  
Jenny Crow  
Raffle Organiser

## National Hedgelaying Championship

### ENTERING THE HEDGELAYING COMPETITION

There are two ways that you can enter the 2023 National Championship: either by post or via the NHLS web site. Postal entries can be made using the entry form in the centre of this Newsletter or by downloading a copy from the NHLS web site. The PDF version is available from the public Championship page so you don't need to be registered or logged on to the site to download it. All completed paper forms should be posted to the Chief Steward using the address at the foot of the form.



On the other hand, if you have registered with the web site, there is an online entry form available **once you are logged in.**

It's only a matter of filling in a couple of bits of information on a form so is much quicker and easier than the paper version especially if you have entered previously.

The picture on the left shows where the entry form is on the web site menu.

*Richard Hooker*

### Leather Hedging Mitts – Arm Guards – Billhook & Axe Holsters



- Hedging mitts, various sizes, left and right hand. Made with chrome or alum tanned leather, seamed or un-seamed. From £40.
- Single edge billhook holsters and axe guards. From £15.
- Forearm guards: small, medium and large, in light or heavy duty. From £18.



Email: [jasperprachek@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jasperprachek@hotmail.co.uk)  
or Call: 07796 502100.

**FROM YOUR TROPHIES AND AWARDS OFFICER...**



I hope you have all enjoyed displaying your hard won trophies from 2022's National Championship with pride.

It is now time to get the polishing cloths out and make sure the trophies are in the best condition to pass them on to their next recipient at this year's championship.

Please ensure they have been engraved with the year and your name.

And please ensure you return them in the condition in which you would want to receive them.

There will be a £5 forfeit fee for all those I deem needing a bit more spit and polish 😊

Please bring them to the main marquee on the morning of the event, and for class winners, please swap for your memento plaque.

Anyone not able to attend on the day, please ensure you have passed the trophy onto someone who can bring it on your behalf, and to avoid any confusion please email me to let me know who to chase up on the day, if needs be: [awards@hedgelaying.org.uk](mailto:awards@hedgelaying.org.uk)

Alternatively, post it to me in plenty of time to:

Mandy Woodham, Keepers Cottage, Hampton, Dorchester DT2 9DY

Please see a list on the opposite page of all who my records show have an award to return that was signed for on the day. I look forward to seeing everyone again this year, for another great day in a field.

*Mandy Woodham*

<i>Class/Trophy</i>	<i>Winner[/Custodian]</i>
Supreme Champion - <i>NFU Trophy &amp; HRH Wooden Cup</i>	Colin Clutterbuck
Reserve Champion - <i>Silver Axe Trophy</i>	Malcolm Johnson
Midland Open - <i>Game Lea Cup</i>	Malcolm Johnson
Midland Intermediate - <i>Farmers Weekly Trophy</i>	Terry Underwood
Best Midland Veteran - <i>Reg Rox Memorial</i>	Richard Payne
Welsh Open - <i>CLA Cup</i>	Chris Davies
South of England Open - <i>Royal Cup &amp; Carved Trophy</i>	Paul Matthews
South of England Intermediate - <i>John Blake Cup</i>	Graham West
South of England Veteran - <i>Shell Tankard</i>	Clive Gilligan
Lancs. & Westmorland Open - <i>Shield &amp; Carved Trophy</i>	Pete Gibson
Lancs. & Westmorland Veteran - <i>Cup</i>	[Andy Kirkwood]
Yorkshire Open - <i>Tarmac Trophy &amp; Carved Trophy</i>	David Boyson
Devon Open - <i>Cup &amp; Carved Trophy</i>	Andy Burrough
North Somerset Open - <i>The Frank Wear Cup</i>	Colin Clutterbuck
North Somerset Intermediate - <i>Stuart Ford Trophy</i>	Bernard Norris
Dorset Open - <i>Dorset Branch NFU Cup</i>	Tim Frampton
Cheshire Open - <i>Cheshire Ploughing and Hedging Society Trophy</i>	Matthew Teece
Best Intermediate Cutter - <i>National Cup &amp; Carved Trophy</i>	Graham West
Best Overall Veteran - <i>H. E. Samuel Tankard</i>	Steve Budding
Best Staking & Binding Midland Style - <i>John Walker Cup</i>	Andrew Williams
Best Lady Competitor - <i>Andrew Adams Cup &amp; Carved Trophy</i>	Rita Jones
Best Competitor Aged Under 27 - <i>Tankard</i>	Chris Davies
Youngest Midland Cutter - <i>Mick Haynes Trophy</i>	Hedley Alexander [taken by Lucie Cowles]
Best Growth Overall - <i>HRH Wooden Tankard</i>	Pete Gibson
Best Midland Regrowth - <i>John Hawkins Cup</i>	John Exton
Best Regrowth South of England - <i>Charlie Tunks Memorial Cup</i>	Nigel Adams
Best Regrowth South of England (Vet.) - <i>Fred Moulard Memorial Cup</i>	Lex Roeleveld
Best Summer Hedge Lancs & Westmorland - <i>First Leisure Trophy</i>	Pete Gibson [Andy Kirkwood]
Best Devon Regrowth - <i>Blackdown Hills Hedge Association Cup</i>	Martin Turner
Best Yorkshire Regrowth - <i>Trophy</i>	David Boyson
Best North Somerset Regrowth - <i>Clive Bethell Shield</i>	Paul Gulliford
Dorset Regrowth - <i>Dorset Regrowth Trophy</i>	Terry Coombe [taken by John Vickery]
Welsh Regrowth - <i>Davies Family Carved Bowl</i>	Gwyn Davies

COMPETITION RULES

1. Open to any paid-up member of the NHLS who has proven ability as a hedgelayer.
2. Competitors having reached their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday on the day of the competition will be eligible for the Veteran prize.
3. Anyone winning an Intermediate class twice must compete in an Open class.
4. The Chief Steward reserves the right to refuse entry to anyone whose standard of work is considered inadequate for the National Competition.
5. All classes will cut up to 10 metres.
6. The time limit for all competitors will be 5 hours, from 09:00am to 2:00pm. Competitors exceeding this time will be penalised. In the event of extreme weather conditions, the chief steward reserves the right to extend the time.
7. Competitors must report to the Chief Steward by 8:30am to attend a safety briefing.
8. Length numbers will be allocated at random after the closing date for entries and are not transferable.
9. Competitors are to lay their allocated length starting from their number and working towards the next highest number.
10. Competitors opening up their length **MUST** leave sufficient material for the next entrant to lay in on completion of their length.
11. Competitors may receive assistance from a steward or another competitor. Other help is not permitted and its use will lead to points being deducted.
12. Competitors must use stakes and binders provided by the Society. Failure to do so will lead to a points deduction.
13. Competitors using excessive deadwood inappropriate for their style will be penalised. Judges will brief competitors accordingly.
14. Judging will be on a points basis. The Chief Steward's decisions are final and no discussion or correspondence will be entered into by the Society.
15. If there are 3 entries or less the class will be cancelled or amalgamated at the discretion of the Chief Steward. No third prize will be paid if there are four entries in the class. No fourth prize will be paid if there are five entries or less in the class.
16. The use of chainsaws is permitted at this competition.  
**All competitors using a chainsaw are required to have a current chainsaw certificate and wear the following safety equipment when using a saw:**  
in-date safety helmet, eye protection, hearing protection, gloves, leg protection incorporating chain clogging material, chainsaw protective footwear incorporating a steel toecap, protective guarding in the front vamp and instep, and to carry an in-date personal first aid kit including a large wound dressing.  
 The Safety Officer has the right to penalise any competitor deemed to be working in a dangerous or unsafe manner. This could result in the **deduction of 10 points** from a competitor's score.
17. All waste material must be left where designated within the time limit for the competition.
18. Competitors who have won any Open class at a National Championship may only enter an Open class regardless of cutting style chosen. This rule ceases to apply once a competitor reaches the age of 65.

WORDSEARCH – “A SUMMER GARDEN”

D	E	L	P	H	I	N	I	U	M	M	H	O	L	L	Y	H	O	C	K
B	S	A	L	V	I	A	D	V	H	L	S	W	D	C	I	N	F	G	C
U	Q	D	G	S	R	D	A	H	L	I	A	E	R	I	Q	V	O	E	O
T	M	Y	X	O	C	J	Y	R	P	Y	S	F	I	Z	R	A	X	R	U
T	W	H	Y	D	R	A	N	G	E	A	S	E	R	F	H	H	G	A	B
E	M	G	Q	H	B	Z	S	F	J	Q	N	W	C	C	F	O	L	N	I
R	G	G	I	I	L	E	V	N	P	I	U	E	E	A	I	S	O	I	O
F	F	S	X	N	M	A	S	M	A	A	Q	W	C	E	T	E	V	U	C
L	U	H	W	P	A	K	V	Y	I	P	R	O	N	O	D	E	E	M	H
Y	S	O	D	E	I	N	X	E	S	D	D	S	B	I	S	S	U	D	A
H	C	N	A	L	E	A	D	W	N	S	T	R	L	R	N	M	I	R	R
R	H	E	I	S	I	T	P	T	S	D	U	H	A	E	E	P	O	Q	S
O	I	Y	S	P	Q	L	P	E	O	M	E	N	K	G	Y	E	R	S	L
S	A	S	Y	A	C	U	Y	E	O	N	A	R	F	F	O	B	Z	B	N
E	T	U	A	D	R	G	O	V	A	N	I	R	X	L	P	N	Z	E	D
S	K	C	O	E	H	L	U	Q	D	S	I	C	I	V	O	V	S	M	B
A	R	K	S	Y	O	O	D	F	S	S	E	E	U	G	C	W	K	Z	T
G	D	L	A	I	E	V	Q	L	E	V	G	R	S	G	O	Z	E	R	E
V	P	E	F	A	K	E	A	E	M	W	Q	D	B	R	D	L	R	R	W
T	M	D	J	D	X	S	O	D	Q	F	G	B	V	C	J	A	D	P	B

- SNAPDRAGONS
- HONEYSUCKLE
- HYDRANGEAS
- SWEET
- HOE
- BUTTERFLY
- FOXGLOVE
- SUNFLOWER
- COSMOS
- GLOVES
- PARSLEY
- BIOCHAR
- SALVIA
- DAHLIA
- ROSES
- HOSE

- GINANDTONIC
- LILY
- DELPHINIUM
- PEAS
- SECATEURS
- HOLLYHOCK
- MARIGOLD
- GERANIUM
- PEONIES
- LAVENDER
- BREEZE
- WEEDS
- DAISY
- FUSCHIA
- SPADE



**THE FIRST COMPLETE WORD SEARCH TO BE MAILED TO THE EDITOR AT NEWSLETTER@HEDGELAYING.ORG.UK WINS A BOTTLE OF GRANTS WHISKY.**

**YOU CAN PHOTOGRAPH YOUR ENTRY AND SEND AS AN EMAIL TO THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR – MAKE SURE YOU INCLUDE YOUR FULL NAME, ADDRESS AND POST CODE.**

**THE WINNER OF THE LAST NEWSLETTER WORDSEARCH WAS LAURA HAWKER.**



# Annual Gathering & AGM

Supporting the Coppice Industry

13-15 October 2023

- pre-event courses
- skill sharing
- demonstrations
- talks and discussions
- site tours
- tool auction
- craft competition
- the AGM happens too

[ncfed.org.uk](http://ncfed.org.uk)



Hosted by

## NHLS Affiliated Organisations



### BLACKDOWN HILLS HEDGE ASSOCIATION

Contact: John Scantlebury, Shoebrooks, Ashculme,  
Hemyock EX15 3SU

Email: [secretary@bhha.info](mailto:secretary@bhha.info)



### BUILTH & DISTRICT PLOUGHING AND HEDGING SOCIETY

Contact: Sam Davies, Gwarafog Bungalow, Garth, Llangammarch Wells LD4 4BH

Email: [gwarafog@btinternet.com](mailto:gwarafog@btinternet.com) Tel: 07791 526383



### CHESHIRE PLOUGHING & HEDGE CUTTING SOCIETY

Contact: Susan Ball, The Croft, Church Lane, Smallwood,  
Sandbach CW11 2UT

Email: [sueball\\_lynhouse@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sueball_lynhouse@hotmail.co.uk)

Tel: 01260 270180



### COTLEY HARRIERS

Contact: Mary Perry, Wambrook Mill, Wambrook, Chard TA20 3EW

Email: [maryperry@cotley.co.uk](mailto:maryperry@cotley.co.uk)

Tel: 01460 66543 or 07554 881910

### THE CONSERVATION HEDGELAYERS

Contact: P Vaughan, 19 Tavistock Gardens, Ilford IG3 9BE

Email: [linda@thewannas.co.uk](mailto:linda@thewannas.co.uk) Tel: 020 8590 0879 or 07939 912097

### COTSWOLD TRAINING

Contact: Claire Maymon, Coach House Farm, Cheltenham Road, Broadway WR12 7BY

Email: [claire\\_maymon@yahoo.com](mailto:claire_maymon@yahoo.com)



### DEVON RURAL SKILLS TRUST

Contact: Nick Dawe, 8 Post Hill, Tiverton EX16 4ND

Email: [nick.dawe@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nick.dawe@hotmail.co.uk)

Tel: 01884 254953



### DURHAM HEDGEROW PARTNERSHIP

Contact: Sue Mullinger, Durham County Council,  
Landscape & Arboriculture R E D, Durham DH1 5UQ

Email: [sue.mullinger@durham.gov.uk](mailto:sue.mullinger@durham.gov.uk) Tel: 0300 026 7142

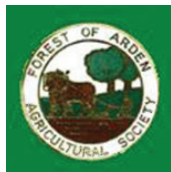
**EXPECTATION ENTERTAINMENT LTD**

Contact: Pete Richardson, 8B Ledbury Mews, London W11 2AF  
 Email: [peter.richardson@expectationtv.com](mailto:peter.richardson@expectationtv.com) Tel: 07813 438483



**FAIRFORD, FARINGDON, FILKINS & BURFORD  
 PLOUGHING SOCIETY**

Contact: Emma Horner, Manor Farm, Kelscott, Lechlade GL7 3HJ  
 Email: [emma@kelmscottbandb.co.uk](mailto:emma@kelmscottbandb.co.uk) Tel: 01367 252620



**FOREST OF ARDEN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY**

Contact: Mrs Sue Westmacott, Stockton House, High Street,  
 Henly-in-Arden, B95 5AT  
 Email: [sue@westmacotts.co.uk](mailto:sue@westmacotts.co.uk) Tel: 01564 793746

**HALLATON & DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY**

Contact: Gill Burbidge, Lynham, 31 Kelmarsh Road, Clipston,  
 Market Harborough LE16 9RX  
 Email: [gillburbidge2014@gmail.com](mailto:gillburbidge2014@gmail.com) Tel: 07950 738732



**HEDGE & WOODLAND CONSERVATIONISTS**

Contact: Christopher Kersley, 14 Robins Dale, Knaphill,  
 Woking GU21 2LQ  
 Email: [chris.kersley1167@gmail.com](mailto:chris.kersley1167@gmail.com)

**HORSENDEN HEDGE SLAYERS**

Contact: Justin Bonnet, 37 Buckingham Avenue, Perivale UB6 7RA  
 Email: [justin@justinbonnet.co.uk](mailto:justin@justinbonnet.co.uk) Tel: 07989 259877



**LANCS & WESTMORLAND HEDGELAYING  
 ASSOCIATION**

Contact: Mrs Ann Kendal, Dale House, Grayrigg, Kendal LA8 9BU  
 Email: [sal\\_capewell@hotmail.com](mailto:sal_capewell@hotmail.com) Tel: 01539 824276



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 Email: [office@melplashshow.co.uk](mailto:office@melplashshow.co.uk) Tel: 01308 423337



**MID-SOMERSET AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY**

Contact: Christine Barham, Mid-Somerset Showground,  
 Canards Grave Road, Shepton Mallett BA4 4GF  
 Email: [secretary@midsonersetshow.org.uk](mailto:secretary@midsonersetshow.org.uk) Tel: 01749 938044

**NORTH EAST HEDGELAYING SOCIETY**

Contact: David Boyson, Rothley Mill Cottage, Hartburn, Morpeth NE61 4ED  
 Email: [dbcountryside@btinternet.com](mailto:dbcountryside@btinternet.com) Tel: 01670 774267 or 07771 721573



**SOUTH OF ENGLAND HEDGELAYING SOCIETY**

Contact: Matthew Beard, 6 Drummond Road, Goring by Sea, Worthing, BN12 4DX  
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**SURREY HEDGELAYING GROUP**

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**WESTMORLAND COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY**

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 Tel: 01539 567804



**WIRRAL COUNTRYSIDE VOLUNTEERS**

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 Email: [jpl@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:jpl@liverpool.ac.uk) Web: <http://www.wcv.today/>  
 Tel: 01516 458937 / 07527 570471

**WRINGTON & BURREINGTON HEDGING SOCIETY**

Contact: Ian Ford, Sutton Farm, Sutton Street, Butcombe, Bristol BS40 7XQ  
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**YORKSHIRE HEDGELAYING ASSOCIATION**

Contact: Charlie Calvert, Moor Farm, Stripe Lane, Hartwith, Harrogate HG3 3HA  
 Email: [cbc122.cc@gmail.com](mailto:cbc122.cc@gmail.com) Tel: 07712 397959

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**SINCE RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE ON FEBRUARY 24, 2022 THE UK FARMING COMMUNITY HAS BEEN A GENEROUS SOURCE OF SUPPORT. VEHICLES MUST BE: 4X4, DIESEL, CREW CAB IDEALLY, NOT OLDER THAN 2004. MILEAGE AND CONDITION ARE IRRELEVANT AS LONG AS THE VEHICLE RUNS WELL AND HAS A CURRENT MOT. TYPICAL CANDIDATES: MITSUBISHI L200; ISUZU D-MAX; TOYOTA HILUX AND FORD RANGER. OPTION TO HAVE THE VEHICLE COLLECTED OR TO TAKE PART IN A DRIVE-OVER.**



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**AFTER**

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# MEMBER 2023