



NATIONAL HEDGELAYING SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Preserving the past, protecting the future

SUMMER 2022

CONTENTS

NHLS BUSINESS & MEMBERS	2
MICK HAYNES	2
JOHN SAVINGS.....	3
ARTICLES	4
BRITAIN'S HEDGES NEED TO GROW UP!.....	4
COPPICING WITH STANDARDS.....	9
2022 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP	11
CHAMPIONSHIP ENTRY FORM	14
ARTICLES (CONTINUED)	19
COVER STORY: HEDGE GRANTS FOR 2023	20
OBITUARIES	24
MICK HAYNES 1.5.1923–1.5.2022.....	24
DIVERSIONS	26
NHLS AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS	27

FROM THE EDITOR



On the day of the great 40-degree heat spike, July 19th, dairy farmer and chief executive of the Soil Association Helen Browning told the Guardian newspaper, “I wish we’d planted more trees on our farm... They bring benefits for wildlife and carbon but also shade and shelter – but they would take 20 years to grow now.”

My advice would be to grow a hedge because it doesn’t take 20 years, but make sure it’s a proper one – which can mean big and baggy or cut and laid, if you read the articles in this Summer issue of the newsletter by myself and by Colin Clutterbuck. Then we have Mike Hartnell’s guide to coppicing. Coppicing is another fast way to

generate natural shade, wildlife habitats, soil retention – and of course a steady supply of stakes and binders for hedgelaying and many things beside.

We say a fond farewell to Mick Haynes (pages 2, 3 and 24), much-loved by all and great and devoted servant of the NHLS.

Finally, there is an entry form for the National Championship (Oct 29) that you can tear out and mail back to Chief Steward Clive Bethell – or enter online (see p 17). Don’t forget the Charity event on Oct 1. Hope to see you all at one or both.

Richard Lofthouse

The front cover shows farmer Robert Crocker with stock fence protecting a hedge laid by Hefin Davies. (See article on page 20)

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



DEAR Members by the time you receive this newsletter we will be at the start of a new hedgelaying season, and by all accounts it’s going to be a very busy one.

Our Secretary continues to do the rounds with the new show display and the interest is absolutely phenomenal in hedgelaying and the benefits it has on the countryside. I was on the stand at the recent Game Fair at Ragley Hall and the interest from Europe was unbelievable. There is now a group in North America, the North American Hedgelaying Society (NAHS). A big thank you goes out to David and his wife Carol, who have taken charge of the show display and continue the task of promoting the Society around the country and to all those that turn out to man it during the shows. If I tried to name you all I would miss someone so please accept this as a thank you to all of you – it’s always good at these events to see old friends and meet new ones.

The interest continues to grow and the need for Training and Accreditation has never been greater so if you are holding a training event please make sure that you put it on the Website and then we can direct people wanting training to your event.

Jill Salt from Central England Training has kindly taken on the role of administrating the Accreditation Scheme and doing the registration with Lantra so please send your application in and we will make sure that it is dealt with.

The Society is also looking to refresh the Website and that is still work-in-progress. We are also working with a Human Resources team to put together a Job Description, in pursuit of a paid employee who will help us in the day to day running of the Society.

The first event on the 2022-23 calendar is the Charity event once again to be held at the Rotherfield Estate in Hampshire on Saturday 1st October. The chosen charities this year are Prostate Cancer and Breast Cancer and I am sure you will agree with me that they are both worthwhile charities. I know that most of us know someone who has gone through these terrible illnesses and maybe even lost someone very close to us, so do come along and support this very worthwhile event.

The National Championship this year is to be held at Wallingford in Oxfordshire on Saturday October 29th. Details are in this Newsletter along with how to enter, so please get your entries in for both events and hope to see you there and have a catch up.

Have a good season

Joe Craig

MICK HAYNES

It is with great sadness that we have to announce the passing of NHLS stalwart Mick Haynes. Mick contributed a huge amount to the Society in his time. Below are a couple of tributes to Mick from those who knew him well.

An obituary by his family appears on page 24 of this Newsletter.

It was with much sadness, yet fond memories, that we learnt that Mick Haynes passed away on his 99th birthday, 1st May 2022. Mick and Sam moved down to Devon some years ago in his retirement, not that he stopped working of course, and he kept himself busy. I had the privilege of going down to interview him about his life in the hedgelaying world three years ago and we sat laughing most of the day!

I first asked him how he got into hedgelaying and he told me he had started as a student. The farmer said you're not doing a bad job so I've eight chain of hedge I want you to cut, I'll give you fifteen bob a chain (75 pence for 20 metres or thereabouts for our younger members) and if I spell your name backwards you won't have any tax to pay! In those days a chain a day was thought to be a good day's effort so he used to try to do a few more yards to allow for wet days. In 1979 the national had reformed, Mick having won an earlier national where Bert Clark was judge but Bert refused to hand the cup over!! The first national was sponsored by Tarmac and Mick stewarded all the match himself leading to complaints from the Welsh classes that as they were drawn last they had no intention of finishing on time.

In those early days few would know the importance that famous double act of Carter and Haynes had on the matches and it's down to their perseverance that we have a strong society today. Mick himself often picked the bill up for clearing up or took his men and a lorry to cut and haul stakes and binders.

His NHLS service record was 21 years as Steward, 10 as Treasurer and 3 as Secretary.

Tony Carter used to tell me very proudly how Mick, in his retirement, walked down to fetch the paper every morning and back again. It wasn't until we visited them that I realised just what a feat that was, it was almost like a daily mountain climb! Eventually he got a mobility scooter but let's not mention the accidents he had, finishing up underneath it on more than one occasion. Who knew you could get a speeding ticket at four miles an hour!

Many years ago we cut a big quick hedge in a match at Hagley and Halesowen when Mick would have been well in his seventies and we all struggled. After finishing I said, "well Mick some good news and some bad today, I don't think you've won but your heart is good enough to last 100 years." Well, known to be a bit awkward, he proved me wrong on that one passing on his 99th birthday. Rest peacefully mate you will never be forgotten that's for sure.

The Hedgelaying family I know would all send their condolences to Sam and the family.

Steve Budding

"What Ho!" – Mick's usual greeting.

He was born in an era when at school, if foxhounds were about, the whole school went to the meet to watch, with great excitement.

Buying his first JCB in 1960, Mick was offered a job grave digging with said JCB at 10 shillings per grave, at some large cemetery. He turned it down (told to me by Mick).

In his youth and beyond, he competed with the best at hedgelaying – Bert Clark, Tony Carter, all the Hawkins family, whether he competed against George Hopkins, Frank Lawrence or Billy Weale I wouldn't know, but I presume so.

A quiet country gentleman with traditional views, set in many ways, but not afraid to try things new in his 90s. Nivea for men, pizza, denim, Netflix, paddle boarding, pink champagne, hearing aids!

Taking great pride in his family, he was so fantastically supported by Sam and Lizzy and all the family.

Lizzy recorded this recently talking to Mick: 'But all these little things that you learn through life: 'Put them all together and you find you haven't wasted your life, as much as you thought you had.'

A great sentiment by a great gentleman.

Robin Dale

JOHN SAVINGS

A wonderful way to finish the Jubilee weekend was to spend it celebrating the wedding of John and Glynis Savings.

On Sunday 5th June 2022, several hedgelaying friends and NHLS members shared a very special and intimate ceremony at the Bay Tree Hotel at Burford in Oxfordshire. It was a very happy and fantastic day with three outfit changes for Glynis and some very snappy dancing from the newly-weds.

With John's hard working reputation and ability to have great fun at any occasion, we were all very honoured to help John and Glynis mark the day.

John, who built the display trailer and took it around many shows promoting hedgelaying was last year awarded "Volunteer of the Year" by the Heritage Crafts Awards. With new interests, hobbies and adventures planned with Mrs Savings, John has passed care of the display bonsai trailer to me.

We wish John and Glynis all the best for their future life together!

David Whitaker



BRITAIN'S HEDGES NEED TO GROW UP!

Colin Clutterbuck

HARNESSING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF OUR HEDGEROWS

How do you massively increase tree cover and biodiversity on productive farmland without taking up valuable land, with minimal or no extra cost, and without planting a single tree? Oh yes, and within 2 or 3 years?!

There is a lot of talk about increasing tree cover (and biodiversity) for obvious reasons, but the focus is always on tree (or hedge) planting, which is costly and difficult to maintain, and requires large amounts of land and large amounts of plastic in the form of tree shelters, which are sometimes all that remains after a few years.

With a different approach to hedge management, we could massively increase the volume of trees and shrubs already in our hedges and at the same time boost the flowering/fruiting capabilities of our hedged landscape and all the added benefits to wildlife that would bring.

The target for this 'new' system are well established hedges that are on a normal trimming regime, i.e., trimmed to a box shape every year (or a slight variation on that) normally with the aim of maintaining a tidy, thick, easily managed and ideally stock-proof barrier. See diagram 1.

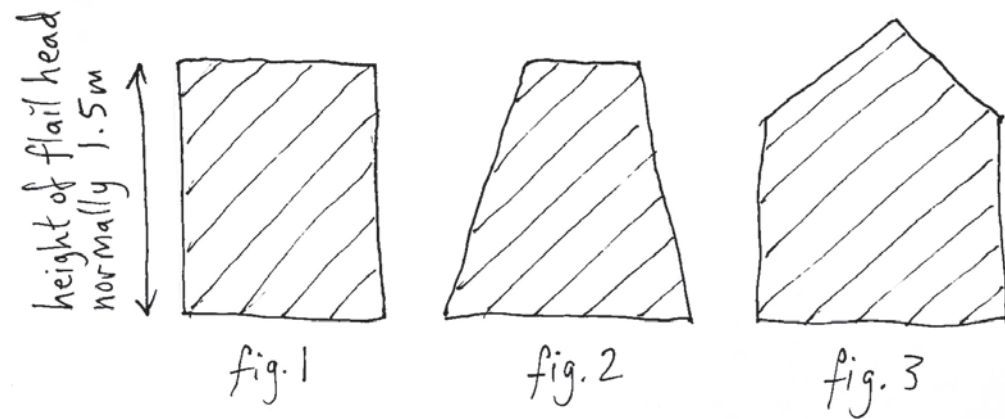


Diagram 1: Basic hedge profiles after trimming

These hedges can be good cover for nesting birds and small mammals etc if done well, but most of the potential for the hedge trees to flower and fruit are removed every year as many trees only flower on the 2nd or 3rd year growth. There have been attempts to increase the flowering capability of our hedges (see hedgeline.org.uk - Hedge cutting) to encourage landowners to trim every 2 or even 3 years, or incrementally increasing the height and width of the hedge each year. These systems work really well, but for many, mainly practical reasons they have not been adopted by many landowners/farmers in my area.

As an alternative the 'new' system takes the basic annually trimmed hedge and simply allows the middle part of the hedge (about 1/4 of the width) to grow up, while maintaining the rest as normal. See diagram 2.

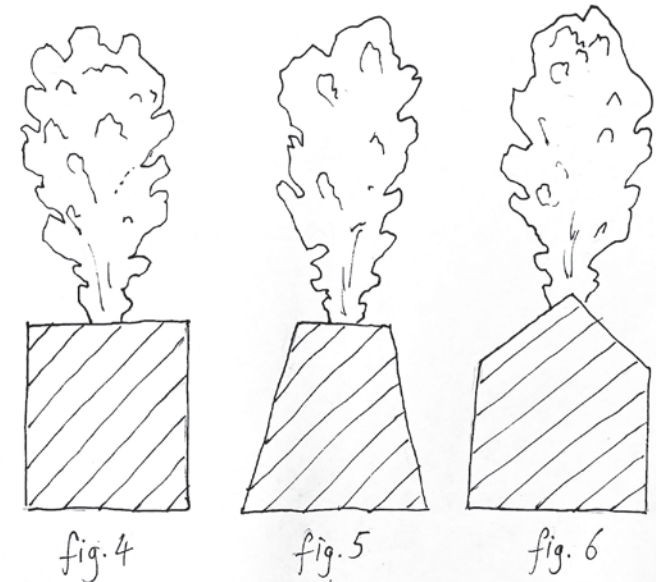


Diagram 2: The Double Decker hedge. New system profiles (after 2 or 3 years)

With minimal changes to the hedge trimming system the contractor could achieve this with about the same amount of passes with the flail as before, i.e., no extra cost, particularly if trimming to a chamfered top as in fig 6.

The taller you trim the hedge before it is left untrimmed the less of an "umbrella" shading effect on the lower hedge and ground flora in the hedge margins, and this also creates a more elegantly pleasing hedge, so figs, 4, 5 & 6 could eventually resemble figs 7, 8 & 9 in Diagram 3.

Hedge profiles in Diagram 3 achieved with the same or similar number of passes with the flail as original profiles in Diagram 1.

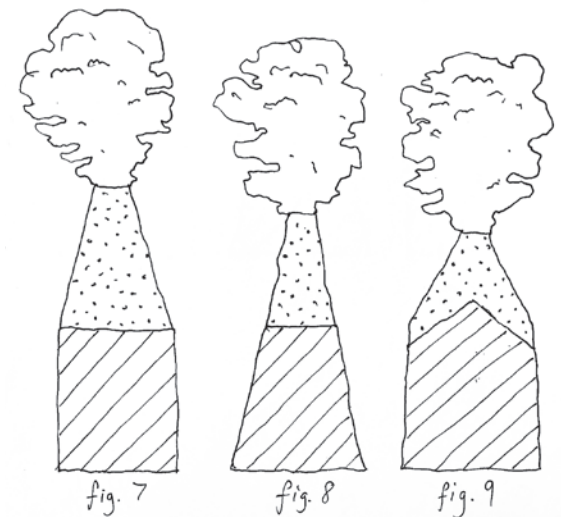


Diagram 3

This “new” hedge trimming system is already being done (at least on one side of the hedge) by accident and/or intention, possibly boundary hedges with a conflict of interest – where one neighbour lets his side grow up to act as a visual screen or shelter for livestock, crops, or buildings in extreme weather, while the other neighbour wants to keep their side tightly trimmed. See the photos below.



Leaving the middle part of the hedge to grow for just one year produces a huge positive effect and that will increase year on year as the trees grow. Even after decades of trimming in this way as in the photos above, these hedges are still very dense at the base, but with a great flowering canopy above and out of reach of browsing animals.¹

Another benefit of this system is the potential for new hedgerow ‘standards’ to grow, acting like a nursery where eventually the larger tree species will get a chance to mature and provide another valuable ecosystem in decades and centuries to come.

Possible negative impacts of this system and how to avoid them

As with previous attempts to improve our hedgerows for wildlife, there are possible negatives but with careful consideration there should be space for a percentage of hedges on even the nearest farms that could benefit both wildlife and the landowner if they changed to this system.

- Shading of ground flora and arable crops by a taller hedge will inevitably happen to some extent. North to South aligned hedges would be less affected than hedges aligned East to West. Many wild flowers in or next to hedges flower in Spring, before hedges come into leaf, so won't be affected.
- If the obscured visibility caused by a tall hedge is seen as a problem, choose hedges which cause the least visual interference, or alternatively allow sections of the hedge to grow up with large gaps in between. See diagram 4.
- Roadside hedges would probably need wide verges unless the road side of the hedge was trimmed higher to allow vehicles to pass safely underneath.
- Hedges with a lot of elm or ash could eventually cause damage to fences or people from falling deadwood if not managed properly, i.e., felled at the right time for firewood.
- Hedges underneath overhead power cables should be avoided.
- The weight of the extra growth would in time, flatten the angle of a newly laid hedge, so select alternative hedges, or wait a few years until better established.

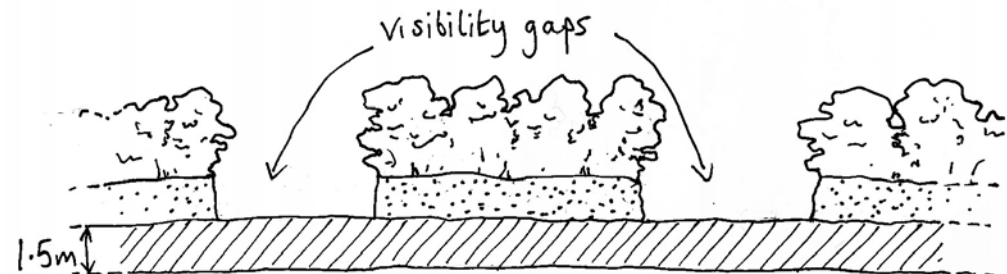


Diagram 4

¹ See the YouTube video by the National Biodiversity Data centre called “Managing Healthy Hedgerows” featuring farmer John Fogarty who is managing his hedges in a similar way.

Long-term management of the hedge

- As can be seen the previous photos, a hedge can be maintained in this way for decades without problems.
- Alternatively, the 'top' can be cut on rotation like a coppice or pollard every few years for firewood or woodchip particularly for fast growing species like hazel or willow, (a branch logger is an efficient machine for processing small diameter hedge wood). This would allow more light back into the base of the hedge periodically and provides valuable fuel.
- If the hedge eventually gets thin at the base it could be laid or coppiced.

Six reasons why we should adopt the new hedge trimming system

6 reasons why we should adopt the new hedge trimming system: -

1. Carbon sequestration – it increases the volume of tree canopy cover year on year.
2. It provides an untrimmed element to the hedge, which would increase the flowers – fruit – pollinators – birds – bats etc.
3. It retains the dense base of the basic and practical, annually flailed hedge and the associated wildlife favouring this habitat.
4. It provides shelter in extreme weather.
5. It is a nursery for future hedgerow standard trees.
6. It is easy and cheap to do.

If just 5% of the total length of hedgerow in the UK was changed to this system about 25,000 miles of vibrant, buzzing new 'tree avenues' would be created without planting a single tree.

We need more trees in the UK, they're there already. It's time to let them grow!

I have been approaching land/hedge owners to try this new system out with generally positive responses. As mentioned earlier, there would be little or no extra cost to the hedge owner, but to change a long-established method to a new system takes a bit of effort and planning, so a small financial incentive from the government (for benefits to wildlife, and maybe more importantly, carbon sequestration) per metre or kilometre of hedge, would really help ensure a good uptake to really make a massive, positive impact.

My aim is that this "new" way of managing a hedge will become the new norm and that you should be thinking not "*where can I do this on my farm?*", but "*where can't I do this?*". The starting point could be, change your hedge trimming to this system unless there is a good reason not to, and make the annually flailed "top and sides" hedge be the exception rather than the rule.

If anyone knows how to move this forward, please get in touch.

Any feedback is welcome. Email: colinjclutterbuck74@btinternet.com

Phone: 01275 331528 Mobile: 07840 461854

COPPICING WITH STANDARDS

Mike Hartnell

ENCOURAGING WOODLAND OWNERS TO REJUVENATE OR ESTABLISH COPPICE WITH STANDARDS

Combining a "coppice with standards" policy alongside the normal commercial element of managing our woodlands, can provide a useful additional income as well as an excellent way of bringing neglected woodland back into management and profit. However, experience has taught me that it is very difficult to encourage many landowners to spend money on neglected woodland without a good business plan, long term commitment and a positive vision.



Coppicing is a continuous renewable source that has been around for hundreds of years. It can be achieved with little intervention and is part of an ancient silvicultural system, which relies, firstly on regeneration, and secondly on enrichment. Above all, it is the principal source of materials for hedgelaying. Without good coppice we don't have good stakes and binders.

Just another quick fix?

Short rotational crops have often been recommended as a way of revolutionising our industry. In the 50s, 60s and 70s, we were encouraged to plant Poplar for matches and packaging; then in the 80s we were encouraged to plant Alder for broom and brush handles. More recently it's been cricket bat willows. Yet, regardless of any trend, well managed woodlands with established coppice have continuously supplied industry, and is profitable if carried out correctly.

There are robust and frequently under-supplied markets for hedgelaying, Chestnut fencing, interwoven garden panels, firewood, charcoal and, more recently, biomass. Coppicing is an integral part of woodland management and can make a positive contribution to overall income.

"Coppice with standards" means creating a final crop spacing that enables mature trees to grow on to full rotation (say 120 years). Chosen trees for coppicing with standards are usually Oak or Sweet Chestnut and a final spacing of 100 trees per hectare (1 tree every 10 metres between trees and between rows), is required. A robust understorey of shade bearing minor trees like Hazel, form coppice stools, these are then cut back and worked every three to fifteen years in order to provide income producing products. The final crop trees, if clean

and straight, can produce a healthy income once reaching maturity. While the understorey of coppice produces regular intermediate income every decade. Some woodland areas may be coppice-only, with no trees growing to final rotation, though these can be introduced as and when required. You can, of course, start with coppice-only working and convert to “coppice with standards” by marking, not removing and then pruning up single stems.

Implementation

One of the best ways to implement “coppice with standards” is to adopt a softly-softly approach. First, open up the crown to allow just enough light to enter the understorey. This should be sufficient either to re-establish the coppice or to encourage the next generation of trees. Your woodland should take the appearance of a wide mosaic of different ages of coppice working.

Coupes are normally the best option, ensuring that the structure of the wood is changed very little at any one time. No more than 5% of any block of woodland should be felled or coppiced in any one year. Coppicing can then be worked on as quickly as 3-5 year rotations.

A further reason for managing areas in this way is to keep up with ongoing maintenance issues, such as the removal of briars, invasive weeds and non native species as well as undertaking the supplementary planting that normally becomes necessary when any wood has had its natural structure changed. Wildlife such as butterflies, dormice and other fauna and flora all benefit as a direct result of this overall restoration and maintenance.

Ancient Woodland

A diverse variety of wooded areas fall within the criteria of “ancient woodland”, which is defined as any woodland in existence on the same site before 1600. Amenity and biodiversity are likely to be major priorities in any ancient woodland and the fact that the woodland is so obviously old, need not complicate the way it is managed.

Many ancient woodlands were destroyed by war time cuttings, and post-war afforestation programmes, which substantially increased our coniferous forest. However, large areas of ancient woodland remain in central and southern England, many now sadly neglected, though formerly worked profitably as “coppice with standards”.

With the encroachment of non-native species, we now have to lend a helping hand in turning the tables and restoring these important woodlands. We urgently need to identify such areas, remove any conifers and exotic hardwood, reinstate the appropriate native species and take care that at no time do we jeopardise the structure or landscape that we are working with.

(continued on page 19)



2022 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

THE 43RD CHAMPIONSHIP

SATURDAY 29TH OCTOBER 2022

**CLACKS FARM, CLACKS LANE,
WALLINGFORD, OXON. OX10 8PN**



BY KIND PERMISSION OF CROWMARSH BATTLE FARMS

I hope you have all been enjoying the sunshine & had a nice break.

It's not long now till the charity hedgelaying day so get your entry forms in ASAP please. It's for a good cause and we need Hedgelayers! As long as I know by September 20th that's fine. There are still rooms available in the Angel hotel for that, but you need to book that with me not the hotel. Use What3words (stems.kinder.efficient) for the entry of the site – it's a one way in only entry. Postcode is GU34 3SA or follow the pink hedging signs.

Then 28 days later it's the Championships at Benson, Wallingford, Oxford. There is a hotel if anyone would like to book in for the weekend, go through Booking.com <https://www.google.com/travel/hotels/s/vMgd2xvGvwpPCTWb7>

I'm still looking for judges & stewards. I have some for some classes but need some the other classes, if you know of anyone who would be kind enough to offer to judge or steward, please let me know ASAP. Also Sponsors for some classes as well.

The entry forms are in this newsletter - don't waste time, book yourself in if you're entering the Championships online or send the form back.

Wow what exciting but busy summer I've had! As some may know, the society help turn my trailer into something special for the second lot of mini hedges to be put on show and another NHLS gazebo, with the second trailer to save on traveling, time and money



This is what happens when you don't get the support that's needed!

We've had a massive amount of interest in becoming members, training and also working in the industry from these shows, but I have to say that there is massive lack of support from other members to help out at these shows. We all give up a lot of time to do the shows and other events and we are just volunteers that do it. So even if it's just few hours or the day would be a great. (sorry for the dig)

Clive Bethell

NHLS Vice Chair, Championship Co-Ordinator, Chief Steward & Sponsorship Officer



Class	Scoring (100 points in total)
Midland Open & Intermediate	Cut & Pleach35
	Stake & Bind25
	Back of Hedge.....20
	General Appearance.....20
Welsh Open	Front & Pleach25
	Back of Hedge.....25
	True to Style.....25
	Stake & Top25
Derby Open	Cut & Pleach35
	Stake & Bind20
	Back of Hedge.....20
	General Appearance25
South of England Open, Intermediate & Veteran	Cut & Pleach35
	Stakes & Binders.....35
	General Appearance.....30
Lancs & Westmorland Open	Choice of Wood & Distribution30
	Axe Work25
	Stakes.....25
	Finish (inc. Bank, Ditch, etc.)20
Yorkshire Open	Cut & Pleach40
	Stake & Rail40
	General Appearance.....20
Cheshire Open	Cutting & Pleaching35
	Build & Appearance.....25
	Staking & Fencing.....20
	Back of Fence.....20
Devon Open & Intermediate	Cutting & Laying, Quality of Cutting of Stool, Lack of Splitting.....30
	Selection & Best use of Crooks30
	General Appearance, Quality of Finished Hedge, Effectiveness as Stock Barrier, Tidiness of Site.....40
North Somerset Open & Intermediate	Heels & Pleachers35
	Stake & Firmness35
	General Appearance.....30
Dorset Open	Cutting & Laying, Quality of Cutting of Stool, Lack of Splitting.....30
	Selection & Best use of Bonds30
	General Appearance, Quality of Finished Hedge, Effectiveness as Stock Barrier, Tidiness of Site.....40

PRIZE MONEY

The prize money is the same in all classes: 1st: £100, 2nd: £70, 3rd: £50, 4th: £20

September 2022

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 Wallingford 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 Please ensure anything is posted to arrive by Friday 21st 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 Oxfordshire this year.

Best wishes
 Jenny Crow
 Raffle Organiser



43RD NATIONAL HEDGE LAYING CHAMPIONSHIP

SATURDAY 29TH OCTOBER 2022

CLACKS FARM, CLACKS LANE,
WALLINGFORD, OXON. OX10 8PN

BY KIND PERMISSION OF CROWMARSH BATTLE FARMS

HEDGE LAYING 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.hedge laying.org.uk

Address -----

Telephone: -----

Mobile: -----

COMPETITION CLASS - Tick One Box

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

OTHER INFORMATION

Date of Birth: -----

If you intend to use a chainsaw at the competition, you must hold a current chainsaw safety certificate and wear Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) at all times while using the saw.

Chainsaw Certificate No -----

Next of Kin: -----

Contact No. -----

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

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

Overdue NHLS Subscriptions MUST be paid before your entry will be accepted.

Return completed forms to:

NHLS Chief Steward, 3 The Croft, Anchor Street, Watchet TA23 0BY

Closing Date for Entries: 14th October 2022

NHLS MERCHANDISE



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. For example mugs or maybe thermal mugs? If we get enough interest we can look into prices.

Order forms from: merchandise@hedgelaying.org.uk

- Rugby Shirt (Navy/Bottle Green)£26.00
- Polo Shirt (Navy/Bottle Green/Maroon)£18.00
- Hoodie (Pullover)£18.00
- Hoodie (Zip Up).....£23.00
- Fleece (Navy/Bottle Green/Maroon)£21.00
- Gilet (Navy/Bottle Green/Black)£20.00
- Beanie Hat (Navy/Bottle Green/Maroon).....£7.75
- Baseball Cap (Navy/Bottle Green/Maroon)£7.75
- Dress Shirt (Khaki/Sliver Grey).....£19.00
- NHLS Tie£5.00

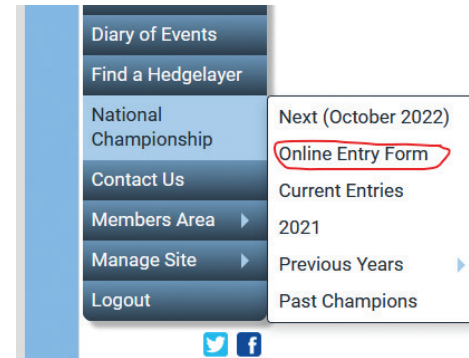
Plus Umbrellas, Key Rings, Car Stickers etc



National Hedgelaying Championship

ENTERING THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

There are two ways that you can enter the 2022 National Championship: either by post or via the NHLS web site. Postal entries can be made using the entry form overleaf or by downloading a copy from the NHLS web site if you want to avoid pulling out this page. 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, or are happy to do it now, 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

FROM YOUR TROPHIES AND AWARDS OFFICER...

I hope you have all enjoyed displaying your hard-won trophies from 2021's National Championship with pride.

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

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

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

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. To avoid any confusion please email me to let me know who to chase up on the day, if needs be.

My contact details are on the back cover of this Newsletter.

Mandy Woodham



COMPETITION RULES

1. Open to any paid-up member who has proven ability as a hedgelayer.
2. Competitors having reached their 65th 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 when they will be directed to their class. The length number has been allocated on receipt of entry and is not transferable.
8. Competitors are to lay their allocated length starting from their number and working towards the next highest number.
9. Competitors opening up their length **MUST** leave sufficient material for the next entrant to lay in on completion of their length.
10. Competitors may receive assistance from a steward or another Competitor. Other help will not be allowed and may lead to points being deducted
11. Competitors must use stakes and binders provided by the Society. Failure to do so will lead to a points deduction.
12. Competitors using excessive deadwood inappropriate for their style will be penalised. Judges will be briefed accordingly.
13. Any competitor refusing to cut the length allocated will be ineligible to compete the following year.
14. Judging will be on a points basis. The Chief Steward's decision is 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 3rd prize will be paid if there are only 4 entries. No 4th prize will be paid if there are only 5 entries.
16. Chainsaws are permitted, but all competitors must use appropriate safety equipment as recommended by the Health and Safety Executive. The Safety Officer has the right to penalise any competitor deemed to be working in a dangerous or unsafe manner.
17. All waste material must be left where designated.
18. Competitors will be allocated their length on receipt of their entry form. No draw for lengths will take place on the morning of the competition.
19. Competitors under the age of 65 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.

SUPREME CHAMPION & RESERVE

The Supreme Champion will receive a prize of £200

The Reserve Supreme Champion (2nd overall) will receive a prize of £100

COPPICING WITH STANDARDS *(continued from page 10)*

Coppicing has been around for hundreds of years, it is a continuous renewable source, and can be achieved with little intervention.

How much material would a well-managed woodland produce?

Sweet Chestnut Coppice

Sweet Chestnut is potentially the most profitable coppice crop:

Approximate yield at 5 years – 15m³/ha.

Approximate yield at 10 years – 65m³/ha.

Approximate yield at 15 years – 130m³/ha.

Yields are based on 800-1000 stools per ha.

Mixed broadleaves

Oak, Birch, Ash, Lime and Alder are worked on a 20-35 year cycle and with high demand for fuelwood. Its proven good management could ensure more than 150 tons per ha of this mixed material.

Hazel

Croppable within 3-7 year cycle. 1,500 stools per ha is achievable with correct management.

This now brings me onto hedge management – with the incentives given to landowners to plant traditional hedges, I do find it frustrating when there is little consideration for the long-term management of all new hedges once they are established - other than flail?? We forestry managers are finding it increasingly frustrating and difficult to find good materials to manage mature hedges and get them laid correctly.

This is why I support the National Hedgelaying Society for their commitment to find, encourage and teach the traditional craft of hedgelaying. With my own training centre in the Cotswolds, I also hope to give a helping hand to the Society.

NOTES

EDITOR NOTE: The National Coppice Federation (NCFed) has a wealth of further advice, (www.ncfed.org.uk) and we have invited them to our National Championship. The Chairman of the NCFed Dave Jackson (Oxfordshire-based) is also a longstanding member of NHLs and heads the Thames Valley Coppicing Group.

AUTHOR NOTE: Mike Hartnell is one of the few remaining private foresters in Gloucestershire/Warwickshire. He has over 40 years of experience in forestry management, consultancy, coppice working, hedgelaying and training.

MDH Forestry Services Ltd & MDH Rural Education

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COVER STORY: HEDGE GRANTS FOR 2023 *Richard Lofthouse*

SOME POINTERS ABOUT THE GREATEST CHANGE TO FARMING SUBSIDIES SINCE 1945, WITH REGARD TO HEDGES!

We want the NHLS to be of practical use to its members. This bulletin item is designed to offer some pointers about the greatest change to farming subsidies the UK has seen since 1945 – the wind down of what used to be the Common Agricultural Policy and its replacement by a pile of alternatives collectively designated under ELMS, which means Environmental Land Management Scheme. Whether you are a farmer or a hedgelayor or both – or lie slightly to one side with forestry, coppicing or woodworking, or something else like dry stone walling, it doesn't matter. Everyone is implicated with the massive impending changes. We want your direct experiences shared across these pages in the next few issues, to help other NHLS members.



From front cover: Robert Crocker on his farm in Oxfordshire

Some farmers have Countryside Stewardship grants already in place, which have allowed for hedge maintenance grants. Our Secretary David Whittaker notes that there was a notion aired at a recent Hedgeline meeting that the government may extend Stewardship grants for another five years. There is a degree of uncertainty. DEFRA is not held in high regard by farmers. We do now have the English Woodland Creation Offer, and within ELMS there are new sources of funding coming on stream, such as the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), plus biodiversity offset payments by housing developers and corporations wanting to mitigate their environmental impact.

The key point about hedges is that they fall within the SFI.

The hedge “standards” that have to be met for subsidies have already been published in draft and are scheduled to become real in 2023. There are some pilots already up and running at the time of writing, August 2022.

Published Subsidies:

- BN5: Hedgelaying, £9.40 per metre
- BN10: Binding & Staking, £3.40 per metre
- BN9: Substantial pre-work, £4.10 per metre
- BN8: Casting up, £3 per metre

Once again, correct at the time of writing, three non-hedge standards are already open for applications: arable and horticultural soils standard; improved grassland soil standard and moorland standard.

The future timetable looks like this:

Year	Indicative standards and levels
2023	Nutrient management standard Integrated pest management standard Hedgerows standard Advanced levels of the 2 soils standards
2024	Agroforestry standard Low and no input grassland standard Water body buffering standard Farmland biodiversity standard Intermediate and advanced levels of the moorland standard
2025	Organic standard On-farm woodland standard Orchards and specialist horticulture standard Heritage standard Dry stone walls standard



Copious Hedge with Standards

I discussed hedges with farmer Robert Crocker at Glebe Farm, Oxfordshire (see front cover). He hired our own Hefin Davies to cut and lay a big hedge last winter. He wants hedges to be valued more by farmers.

He also believes that the estimated 250,000 miles of hedge lost since 1945 needs to be put back.

He was grant aided under a Countryside Stewardship agreement that would appear to foreshadow what's coming down the line from SFI.

"It covered about half the cost", he says.

The future SFI subsidy is better than that - £16.90 per metre if you can combine the first three items noted above, which in theory you can (in particular, laying and stake/bind are separate items commanding their own subsidies but applicable for the same hedge).

But the brutal truth is that it's not going to pay the £19-23 per metre that any contract hedgelayer is going to want, with the costs of fuel going vertically up even since last season.

But as Robert reminded me, a subsidy is an incentive. It's not meant to cover the whole cost.

He adds that the broader scope of ELMS/SFI puts hedges in a very positive light, viewed overall.

"My father grubbed hedges up, grant-aided. I'm putting them back, grant-aided."

The SFI hedge standards also allow £8.80 per tree, placed in a hedge at 20 metre intervals; it allows £11.60 per metre for hedge planting; it allows £9.50 per metre for gapping up, and it allows £4 per metre for hedgerow coppicing, where the relevant species have grown out – a direct source of materials if you've got decent hazel stools to cut, or sweet chestnut.

Firewood if not.

There is even direct advice given by DEFRA on deadwood (oh blimey -).

BN6 Hedgerow Coppicing £4 per metre:

"Cuttings can be placed over newly coppiced stools to prevent browsing by livestock or wild animals, or to leave dead wood for wildlife; however, they must not prevent new growth"

Nothing to argue with there right? Every coppicer I know sticks brush down on freshly cut stools to stop



In search of shade: Robert Crocker with his beef herd

the deer muscling in as soon as new shoots appear, no deer fence appearing to keep the muntjacs out.

The point, as with hedgelaying, is to encourage rather than to stifle regrowth. Deadwood is wildlife friendly but if there's too much of it the regrowth will be choked.

Robert Crocker offers a nice case study because on his 500 acres he has cut and laid beautifully on some field boundaries where he's got a beef herd; elsewhere he's let the hedges grow out, or selectively shaped them into a copious A-shape, allowing fruiting species like crab apple to grow right out while pruning hard on other species like sycamore.

He always respects tree standards and has many old oaks towering over some of his field boundaries. He's planted copse on corners of field where the crops never grow right, and overall he remains clear about the fact that his land is Grade 3 and 4. Nothing is done at the expense of food production. It's just that massive inputs and spraying only goes so far for poor soil: he's been there, done that.

His terminology is also interesting.

"Farmers traditionally hate hedges: they cost money to maintain but provide no yield."

At least that's how his father saw them, and the post-war generation. Hedges were all too often seen as field boundaries but little more.

"An older generation had messy hedges with small fields, we called them closes. They were super and I'm trying to get back to that."

His beef herd lay in the life-saving shade of oak standards left in a hedgeline, when he was on the receiving end of 40.3°C on July 19th. The pollinating value of the right hedge mix is immense, he insists – particularly in conjunction with any wider soil or organic standard, let alone a biodiversity metric.

"I also think of a hedge now as a linear copse and wildlife corridor. The hedge is actually the cheapest way to achieve the biggest wildlife benefit."

He wants to connect an unbroken hedge all the way from his farm in Oxfordshire to his brothers' farms in Cornwall.

There are similar initiatives afoot elsewhere. There is the Great Dorset Hedge project; there is the Weald to Waves project in West Sussex, and there are probably others (please write in!).

If we go back to the SFI, the future Agroforestry standard is going to help hedges further, I think, because if you alley crop fruiting trees, perhaps within a hedge, amidst arable, you stop a lot of potential sun/drought damage, soil erosion and winter flooding, all big current and future problems amidst climate change.

Some of you will have seen pictures of blackened fields in Yorkshire in our recent hot dry summer. It wouldn't have happened in a silvo-arable set up.

This might start to sound a bit disconnected from hedgelaying as we know it, but that's also the measure of what's upon us – massive demand for what we do well and massive changes to grapple with too.

MICK HAYNES 1.5.1923–1.5.2022



A tribute to Dad

It is very meaningful to us to pay tribute to the work and efforts Dad put into the Society. Starting from a young age, Dad was on the path to be a vet, but having started work on a local farm from the age of 11, he got the farming bug. It was here he learnt a host of country crafts, hedge laying included. They were not easy days back then, experiencing life on the farm pre, during and post war.

Hedgelaying, the Society and the National Championship meant the world to Dad. September/ October in the Haynes household was quite something – piles of post (no emails), the land line ringing off the hook (no mobiles), writing out place cards, certificates, and cutters envelopes (no computers)! Not to mention how focused Dad was on delivering the National to ensure cutters were happy (as possible!!), landowners were looked after and that suppliers turned up on time with the right kit.

Mum and Dad, along with other great characters from the day, used to be on the hedgelaying stand annually at The Royal Show, Stoneleigh. Proudly presenting the miniature hedge display John Savings so cleverly made and being on hand to the interested public. Many a laugh was had and the stand was often on the schedule for VIP visitors to the show.

In the latter years, I used to drive Dad to the National. He would wake me up early hours with more excitement than Christmas morning. It didn't matter where it was in the country, he was determined to attend and only actually ever missed one – in 2021 when he was sadly too poorly for the drive.

Some of you will remember Dad as the judge of your class. I remember standing next to Dad as a nipper, with my mouth wide open, listening to the colourful “feedback” he would receive. He always said he would cease judging if mobility prevented him from checking the back of the hedge and it was only in his mid 90s that he finally had to stop.

One thing we remember Dad raising at committee meetings, was ensuring the Society do as much as possible to encourage and support the next generation of hedgelayers. So on Dad's behalf, we hope this continues to be high on the agenda.

We would like to say a big thank you to all the hedgelayers who joined us giving Dad a great send off. We know many of you travelled long distances to be with us. We apologise for not getting around to speak with everyone. Thanks again to Robin for reading out the family tribute and to Steve for his tribute and the wonderful miniature hedge, it's now being admired and photographed by many as they take the path on Exmoor. Dad would be so proud.

Dad was a hard grafting, country gentleman with a cheeky sense of humour. We miss him very much but have very fond memories.

Lizzy, Sam and Family



Mick hedgelaying in his late seventies at Marston Doles, Warwickshire

WORDSEARCH – NIGHT ON THE FARM

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- PIPISTRELLE BAT
- CENTIPEDES
- CINNABAR MOTH
- NOCTULE BAT
- FOOTSTEPS
- WOODLOUSE
- COCKCHAFER
- MILKY WAY
- LAMPLIGHT
- GLOWWORM
- BROWN OWL
- WHOO WHOO
- STARLIGHT
- HAWKMOTH
- FOX
- FARMER
- SNORE
- MICE
- MIDGES
- GHOST
- BADGER
- FROGS
- MOON
- BARK
- MOSQUITO
- HEDGEHOG
- CRICKET



THE FIRST COMPLETE WORD SEARCH TO BE MAILED TO THE EDITOR AT NEWSLETTER@HEDGELAYING.ORG.UK WINS A BOTTLE OF JOHNNY WALKER RED LABEL SCOTCH.

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 SPRING WORDSEARCH WAS WILLIAM SEALY OF DORSET.



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