



# NATIONAL HEDGELAYING SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

*Preserving the past, protecting the future*

**WINTER 2022**



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## FROM THE EDITOR



Thanks as ever to Richard Hooker for his hard work to make this magazine happen. Our Secretary David has written about the shows we attended last year. We need Members to help with shows in 2023 but watch the website for details about what, where and where. Robert Cole has written about the purity of laying a hedge only using materials found from the same hedge. He may well be onto something given the price of diesel. Enormous congratulations to Colin Clutterbuck for winning the Supreme Champion title at the National Championship.

As ever please send content for the Spring issue to

newsletter@hedgelaying.org.uk – deadline for content is April 1.

*Richard Lofthouse*

*The front cover shows 2023 Supreme Champion Colin Clutterbuck and his winning length of hedge.*

*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

I know by the time this newsletter reaches you we will be well into a New Year, but this gives me the chance to wish you all a Happy New Year a healthy and prosperous one despite the trials and tribulations that 2023 is bound to bring with it.

We started the new hedgelaying season supporting the Charity Event but I will leave this for Clive to report on.

The National Championship held at Crowmarsh Farm in Oxfordshire turned out to be one of the best ever. It was a lovely fine day with over 100 entries and 98 actually competing on the day. The BBC turned up to film the event as part of their Countryfile program which aired on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January. Sadly once again this year we lost the Derbyshire style due to lack of entries but hopefully we can reinstate it in 2023 (come on you Derby cutters, get your entries in!). This year I believe was the 41<sup>st</sup> Championship in which founder member Clive Matthew had cut. What a great achievement Clive. North Somerset’s Colin Clutterbuck went on to claim the Supreme Champion title with Malcolm Johnson taking Reserve. Well done to you both. To all those who took part, thank you. Also many thanks to the Chamberlain family for allowing us to use the site and also to Jeremy Irons and John Craven for doing the prize giving.

Thank you to everybody who helped organise this Championship and we all appreciate all the hard work that went on behind the scenes. Thanks also to the Judges and Stewards that officiated on the day. Organising officials is one of the hardest jobs the Chief Steward has to do. If you feel it is something you could do please get in touch.

The Society continues to move with the times and a new website will be coming along in the spring so do look out for that. We also have a new post “Development Officer” that we are looking to fill. It is a paid position to help with moving the Society’s aims forward and take the pressure off the current team of volunteers.

Training in hedgelaying continues apace up and down the country with courses being fully booked and more being added. The first assessments have taken place for the Lantra accreditation program. The assessors have undertaken two training sessions and more assessors will be added as the need arises.

This year the National Championship will be held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October at the old Newton Rigg Agricultural College in Penrith in Cumbria, just on the edge of the beautiful Lake District. Please make a note in your dairies.

The NHLS AGM is on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May so please come along and support us and have your say in helping us keep this Society going. Thank you all for your support over the past 12 months



*Joe Craig*

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING****Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2023 10:00am****Cutnall Green & District Memorial Hall****Addis Lane, Cutnall Green, Droitwich WR9 0NE****W3W: ///under.fail.deleting****AGENDA:**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022
3. Matters arising
4. Correspondence
5. Chair's report
6. Treasurer's report
7. Election of auditors
8. Other officer reports (training, accreditation, and media)
9. Election of executive, trustees, and committee
10. Any other business
11. Date and time of next meeting

**Nominations for Trustees:**

Nominations are required for a total of six Trustees: Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, and three others.

Anyone nominated as a Trustee must be a paid up or life member of the NHLS.

Persons nominated for any of these positions must have agreed to stand for election and must have a proposer and seconder.

**Nominations for President & Secretary:**

Two other posts requiring nominations are: President and Secretary.

Must be a paid up or life member of the NHLS, and must have agreed to stand for election and must have a proposer and seconder.

**Nominations for Committee.**

We are once again asking for nominations for the remainder of the committee to save time at the AGM. Nominations are required for up to 30 members who are over the age of 18 and willing to stand. Should there be more than 30 nominations then there will be a vote. Committee members do not require proposers and seconders and may put themselves forward for election or have agreed to stand if nominated by someone else.

**All Nominations.**

Nominations for all the above must be made in writing by post or email to reach the Secretary:

Mr.D.Whitaker, 2 Armitage Way, Galgate, Lancaster LA2 0BN

By Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 30 days before the AGM

*Before the AGM we are planning to have a social event on the evening of Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May at the*

*Premier Inn, Bromsgrove, B60 1GJ.*

*All are welcome!*

**MEMBERSHIP MUSINGS**

First and foremost, Happy New Year everyone. I hope you all had a good Christmas and are ready for 2023. Steve and I spent Christmas day with our children and grandchildren, chaos as usual.

Membership continues on an even keel with about 550 members. Although some members seem to get lost and not renew, the new ones joining keep the numbers constant.

I am expecting an influx now Countryfile has aired, although I'm not sure if some of those interviewed would put people off. Coupled with Clarkson's farm, due to be broadcast in February, we have had some good publicity at the start of this year.

If you have any problems/queries with your membership please get in touch. I hope to catch up with you all at the AGM in May.

*Margaret Budding*

**NHLS WEB SITE - CHAMPIONSHIP SCORESHEETS**

Just a reminder that the judges score sheets are available on the NHLS web site to logged in members. Click on the little clipboard icon that is overlaid on classic photographs like the one on the right.

If you can't see it, then you're not logged in.

If you can't log in, remember you need to register first to create a password: click on the "Login" menu entry and follow the "Registration Page" link.

*Richard Hooker*



## THE VIEW FROM THE TREASURY

*Andrew Crow*

I doubt that you have previously heard that your Treasurer is pleased to be spending money! The point is that the organisations which provide grant funding for projects expect that money to be spent; not only spent but spent within a given time frame. So it really comes down to the hard work that has been done by members to get the Training and Accreditation Scheme, grant funded by The Prince's Countryside Fund, working. It has also given me the opportunity to speak with many young people, several who have come via the Rural Skills Hub, who are really enthusiastic about learning the craft or improving their skills. There remains further money in the kitty so it would be great if before the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, we can provide more training and assessments for those seeking training and the Bronze Accreditation or higher. If you can provide training, please email the details of when, where and style, to both nhls.training@hedgelaying.org.uk and also to webo@hedgelaying.org.uk so that it can be posted on the website.

Which leads me nicely to our new website which is under development. Fashions and technology evolve, so web designs also evolve. The new website will have a cleaner, fresher look. It will also incorporate several new features to assist with managing the Society but also make it easier for members and others to interact with the website such as for advertising hedgelaying training events and competitions as well as events being held by other relevant rural craft organisations, or individuals, such as hurdle making, charcoal burning, coppicing, thatching, etc. Some of the content on our present website is rather dated and all the content requires reviewing. Is there anyone out there who would like to get involved? If you have experience of web design or would be interested in contributing content, proof reading and editing, providing images or video, or just suggestions as to what you feel would make our new website really function for our Society, please get in touch.

I am sure that those of you who made it to the Championship, whether competing or spectating, had a thoroughly good day. If I were to be picky, the cutters may have found it a bit warm but for the rest of us, the weather was great and we had a good attendance. From the Treasurer's point of view, it was brilliant. Whilst there are one or two more payments to collect at the time of writing, we pretty much broke even, which is a huge achievement, so a huge thanks to everyone and there were many, who contributed.

I believe that another contributory factor was the introduction of the facility to take payments by card. This simplified the acceptance of payments for entry, programmes, raffle tickets and merchandise. No excuses about not having the cash!

Finally, this will be the first year that the accounts have been entirely compiled in Xero, with which we are now getting to grips, although I am sure that we will discover more useful functionality in the future. However, at this stage and subject to the examination of the accounts, I can confirm that the financial position of the Society appears healthy, which is reassuring as we will soon be incurring costs for the Development Officer and further costs for the development of the new website.

The exciting developments within the NHLS continue. I look forward to seeing more young people getting involved and injecting new energy and ideas, and to replace this old fossil at least!

## NEW BOUNDARY GRANTS

Further to the newly released prices for Boundary Grants covering both Hedgelaying and Walling

Below is some basic information about the latest Boundary Grants which have recently been updated. Please check the government website for **FULL and precise details**:  
<http://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants>

These details are aimed at the land owners, but they give us as hedgelayers/wallers good information and enable us to relay it to those that may not know.

The Grants we believe will come into force from June 2023

### HEDGING GRANTS

#### BN5: Hedgerow laying (non stake and bound)

##### *How much will be paid?*

£13.52 per metre. The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

##### *Requirement*

You must:

- Carry out work between 30 September and 31 March when the hedge is still dormant
- Remove old fencing and wire
- Cut and pull out bramble, clematis or other scrambling plants
- Cut out elder plants and prevent re-growth of stumps
- Partially cut through stems near ground level, laying the pleachers (cut stems) over at an angle from horizontal to form a stock-proof barrier
- Remove the uncut heel from each pleacher
- Keep pleachers in position by crooking, staking, or staking and binding
- Keep all existing hedgerow trees
- Remove all cut material from the immediate site after completion of the work
- Control weeds during the first growing season after laying
- Prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible
- Trim the hedge for 3 years after laying, allowing the hedge to become taller and wider at each cut

If you need to fell trees, check if you need a felling licence from the Forestry Commission. If you do, make sure it is in place before you start to fell, otherwise you may be prosecuted.

##### *Do not:*

- Lay hedges downhill
- Obstruct or block access to open access land
- Disturb breeding birds

**BN10: Hedgerow supplement - top binding and staking***How much will be paid*

£5.82 per metre. The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

*Requirements*

- Use stakes made of straight and clean lengths of hazel, ash or sweet chestnut
- Use binders made of straight lengths of hazel, ash or willow, with no side shoots

**BN6: Hedgerow coppicing***How much will be paid*

£5.33 per metre. The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

*Requirements*

- Carry out work between 30 September and 31 March when the hedge is still dormant
- Remove old fencing and wire
- Cut and pull out bramble, clematis or other scrambling plants
- Cut out elder plants and prevent re-growth of stumps
- Encourage vigorous re-growth from the base of the plant by cutting the stems down to ground level (less than 10cm)
- Angle cuts so that water can easily run off
- Keep all existing hedgerow trees
- 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
- Remove all unused cut branches from the immediate site after completion of the work
- Control weeds during the first growing season after laying
- Prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge, or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible
- Trim the hedge for 3 years after coppicing, allowing the hedge to become taller and wider at each cut

*Do not:*

- Obstruct or block access to open access land
- Disturb breeding birds

**BN9: Hedgerow supplement - substantial pre-work***How much will be paid*

£4.10 per metre. The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

*Requirements*

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- Carry out the work agreed with Natural England
- Complete the associated hedge restoration item to the relevant specification

**BN7: Hedgerow gapping-up***How much will be paid*

£17.22 per metre. The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

*Requirements*

You must:

- Carry out work between 1 November and 31 March when the hedge is still dormant
- Prepare the ground along a 1.5m wide strip to provide good soil conditions and as little competition from other vegetation as possible
- Apply any herbicide to the 1.5m strip in the August or September prior to planting
- Make sure plants are:
  - 2-year-old transplants
  - At least 450 millimetres (mm) to 600mm high
  - Native species, with no one species making up more than 70% of the total
  - Planted in a staggered double row 40 centimetres (cm) apart with a minimum of 6 plants per metre
  - Kept clear of weeds until they are established
- Prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge, or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible
- Remove individual guards and tree shelters once the plants are established
- Replace all failures in the following planting season

*Do not:*

- Obstruct or block access to open access land

**BN8: Hedgerow supplement - casting up***How much will be paid*

£3 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

*Requirements*

- Cast up the bank to reflect the local style and build it back to its original profile (this must be established by reference to other banks in good condition nearby)
- Rebuild the bank using the original soil that has slipped from it
- Build each face of the bank so that it slopes inwards (approximately 0.3m for every 1m in height), to create a 'batter' (slope)
- Make the base of the bank wider than the top by roughly 45cm to 60cm on each side
- Ensure the top line of the bank is level with the ground

- Make sure that no healthy mature trees are disturbed
- Restore any stiles and gates to their original construction
- Remove any surplus earth-fill and stones from the site after completion of the work and restore the ground around it

**Do not:**

- Cast up between 1 March and 31 August
- Remove soil from other banks, even if they are derelict
- Bury newly laid or coppiced material in deep earth
- Damage the roots of trees growing on the bank with machinery

**WALLING GRANTS**

**BN12: Stone wall restoration**

*How much will be paid*

£31.91 per metre. The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

**Requirements**

You must:

- Rebuild walls to their original height in the local style - refer to the height and style of other stone walls nearby that are in good condition
- Dismantle (by hand) the existing structure back to a sound construction
- Rebuild the wall so there is an even top line, a consistent batter (slope), and no bulges or depressions along the face of the wall
- Add a filling of solid rocks with each course where it is part of the traditional construction
- Keep all existing wall-side trees and saplings. A wall-side tree is one that forms part of the boundary feature or is attached to it such that livestock do not pass between it and the wall (where relevant)
- Make stockproof (with wooden rails) any gaps left in the wall to allow for tree growth
- Rebuild stone features into the wall such as sheep creeps, troughs and stiles, where features existed prior to the stone wall restoration
- Use original stone where it is available
- Make sure imported stone matches the ones traditional to the area in type, size and style
- Haul stone only when ground conditions are firm enough to prevent damage to the fields next to the wall
- Remove any leftover materials used to complete the wall from the site, and restore the ground where you have carried out the work

**Do not:**

- Disturb foundation stones unless it is necessary to create a firm base
- Use topsoil, earth, sand or fine gravel as filling between courses
- Use concrete or mortar
- Take stone from other walls, banks or buildings on the holding

- Place stone on features of archaeological, historic or wildlife value as identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), Environmental Information Map or Historic Environment Farm Environmental Record (HEFER) (where applicable)

**BN13: Top wiring - stone wall**

*How much will be paid*

£3.60 per metre. The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

**Requirements**

You must:

- Use round timber posts with a top diameter of 75 millimetres (mm)
- Set the posts at centres no wider than 3m (for mild steel wire) or 10m (for high-tensile wire)
- Use posts long enough so that the top wire can be fixed at no more than 300mm above the top of the wall
- Use timber that is fully peeled and tanalised or treated with an appropriate preservative
- Knock the posts into the ground and either set them leaning against the wall or set them alternately on opposite sides of the wall
- Secure the posts
- Staple either half height sheep netting or 2 lines of steel wire 200mm apart to the upright posts
- Use 4mm diameter mild steel or 3.15mm diameter high tensile steel line wire
- Make sure the wire is properly strained and fastened with galvanised staples

**BN14: Stone wall supplement - stone from quarry**

*How much will be paid*

£44 per metre. The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

**Requirements**

- Use imported stone that matches the type, size and style of the wall being restored
- Restore the wall as specified by the BN12 - Stone wall restoration item
- Remove all surplus stone from the site after work has been completed

*The NHLS would emphasise that the descriptions above are an extract from the government web site which should be checked for the definitive versions.*

## TRAVELS WITH OUR TRAILER

*David Whitaker*

2022 has been a very busy year with the NHLS display trailer. We have attended 11 shows, travelling 2,500 miles, setting up on 11 days, manning the stand for 23 days. 34 people came to help us over the 23 days, some coming more than once, equal to 111 “person-days” helping. We gave out 900+ leaflets, 400 children or families of young and old, took part in our “Wildlife Picture Competition”. We gave out lots of “hedgehog” stickers to all that took part and that gave us the opportunity to talk about hedges, the Society, and manage to get a few to join the NHLS.



We travelled Carlisle in the north to Somerset in the south, Cambridge in the east to Malvern in the west and all parts in between. The days can be very tiring, talking to a great number of very interesting people.

We won second prize for “best trade stand” at one show and even had a fly past of a Lancaster bomber at Newark show and then again at Moreton-in-the-Marsh.



After a couple of years with COVID and not attending many shows, in 2022 the number of shows increased. At every show we attended people came and asked would we take the display to their event: ranging from Cornwall, Norfolk, Pembrokeshire and all other points of the compass. We have to explain that to put on this display there is a considerable cost not only travelling towing a trailer but for accommodation.

If the show is a long distance away it means staying overnight. People have asked if they could borrow the display trailer but for reasons relating to insurance cover, this unfortunately is not possible.

Due to the cost of travel and accommodation, the Committee may need to be selective as to which shows we can afford to attend. Maybe in the future we only appear at shows that contribute to the cost of our attendance.



Can I say a very big “thank you” to all that helped on the stand especially those who stayed to pack away the display on the last day of each show. And finally a special “thank you” to Mrs Whitaker for all her help over the year with the display!

Shows we attended in 2022

May	Newark Show (1 day)
May	Country Fest, County Show Ground, Kendal (2 days)
June	Bath and West, Shepton Mallett (3 days)
June	Cumberland Show, Carlisle (1 day)
July	Yorkshire Show, Harrogate (4 days)
July	Game Fair, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire (3 days)
Aug	Cartmel Show, Ulverston, Cumbria (1 day)
September	Moreton-in-the-Marsh Show (1 day)
September	Westmorland Show, Kendal (1 day)
September	“Wonder of Wood”, Barton near Cambridge (2 days)
September	Malvern Autumn Show (3 days)

Dear Member

Firstly, I’d like to thank all the Hedgers and Helpers that came to the Charity Day on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October. What a day we all had. The amount of hedge laid was 555.4 meters, meaning that we entered the Guinness Book of Records with a 300 meter addition to the existing record.

We’re still counting the money raised as I still haven’t had the full updates from GoFundMe & JustGiving, but so far there’s £555.40 from the hedging, and donations of £8000. Thanks to you all for your generosity, especially the lady who came forward with a donation of £600 for the toilet hire.

The Championships were a great success this year. Thanks to all the sponsors for the continued support again this year.

Congratulations to all the winners in their classes.

I must thank the Chamberlain Family for letting us have the Championship at their farm, with some good hedges to lay.

Anyone who came to compete or spectate, I hope you all enjoyed the day.

I must also thank all the helpers who helped set up on Friday. You know who you are. Too many to mention individually.

If you know of a potential sponsor for next year’s match, please get in touch. I look forward to hearing from you.



*Clive Bethell*

*NHLS Chief Steward, Vice Chair & Championship Co-Ordinator*

## IN PRAISE OF THE “YORKIE”

We have many seasoned and experienced hedgers in our Society and we will all have our favourite tools to use, with their individual characteristics and quality of metal. I myself have a firm favourite for several reasons and that is the Yorkshire pattern billhook.



I see many advantages of using this type of hook and would urge younger hedgers to try them.

Firstly, the length of handle puts it apart from the others. This allows an extra height advantage of more than a foot and also means you are working farther away from the thorns.

Secondly the weight, which varies considerably, makes it ideal for larger stems and it doubles up almost as a small axe. It need not be excessively heavy though, many weigh about a kilogram but many more including my favourite are a similar weight to short handled ones.

Thirdly, the length of handle makes it ideal for making double handed chops similar to those powerful shots seen at Wimbledon with a tennis racket. It makes it possible, with a downward swing, to cut stems far thicker than any of the others can cope with. Similarly when cutting heels off with an upward stroke.

Fourthly the length of handle makes it easy to twist to make a pleach run down.

Fifth and last, its extra length makes picking stakes up off the ground much easier by bending and using the

hook end. This is especially useful if you have back or hip problems.

I have amassed quite a collection (much to my wife's chagrin!) and have them into double figures with many well-known brands such as Elwell, Harrison, Bulldog, Spear and Jackson and Cornelius Whitehouse. But my last purchase is by far the best metal and balance making it easy to use the whole day and that is stamped English Tools, not commonly found but fabulous steel which finishes the day the same as it starts.

The disadvantages are two as far as I can see.

Firstly they are not easy to hang from your belt safely so rather than have them to hand on your hip you have to put down and pick up again.

Secondly and probably because others value their usefulness, they tend to be more expensive, many reaching the hundred pound mark and more.

If you are a beginner I would definitely give the Yorkie a go.

*Steve Budding*

## ‘HABITAT’ HEDGING

*Robert Cole*

### ‘HABITAT’ HEDGING GROWS ON SUSTAINABILITY AND SUITS URBAN SETTINGS DOWN TO THE GROUND

‘Habitat’ hedging is not just environmentally friendly: it is practical and economically attractive. It can be done anywhere but fits especially with demands at big-city locations.

Hedging is enjoying a much-deserved revival thanks to its credentials as a sustainable land-management technique. Hedgerows and other ‘habitat’ gardening techniques are important ways to encourage biodiversity. They are good for insects, bees, butterflies, birds, and small mammals such as wood mice, voles, and bats.

To that extent, all styles of hedging are ‘habitat’ styles. However, there is merit, and an enthusiastic market, for the style which puts wildlife at the very centre of the art.

The style is good for human activity too. There's ample scope for participation by diverse and inclusive local volunteer groups in parks and nature reserves.

In some ways, it may be more important to build hedgerow habitats in cities because of the paucity of habitat. There's also plenty of opportunity though there'd be much more if the typical ‘mow and blow’ management of inner-city green spaces is re-assessed.

Organisations with big ambitions to enhance the environment are discovering that ‘habitat’ hedging can play a hugely important part of green regeneration.

Anna-Maria Cahalane-Macguinness (pictured) is one of the trustees of the Fourth Reserve Foundation, a small charity which looks after a stretch of woodland by a cutting on the London to Brighton railway. One section is officially classified ancient woodland even though it is only a couple of miles south of the City of London.

Says Anna-Maria: “We do a lot of habitat hedging at the Buckthorne Cutting Nature Reserve. Robert's hedge laying skills have enabled us to embark on an important nature recovery project and increase biodiversity. The skills have enriched our site enormously.”



Traditionally, and still very importantly, hedges must be stock proof as soon as possible. In urban settings, stock proofing may be a secondary priority and if boundary barriers are required, the ‘stock’ in question may well be walking on its hind legs with headphones in and a mobile phone in hand! Yep, in the city, people are the megafauna mammals in need of care and direction.

That said, a 150-yard mostly blackthorn hedge the urban farm Mudshute, in London's Docklands district, was laid in 2021



in a stockproof habitat style. It is replacing a disintegrating paling fence. (See pic, with four-months regrowth)

“Sustainability is one of the core principles here at Mudchute Farm,” says Tom Davis, the Farm, Park and Open Space Manager. “When planning this project, it was important for us to buy in as little as possible. All the stakes and binders were grown here on the farm in our hazel coppice which, combined with the ‘habitat hedging’ style, suited us especially as the laid hedge is also stock proof.”

“The low emission and high recycling techniques, together with the creation of good, tidy, hedgerow habitat, has impressed trustees, employees, volunteers and visitors,” Tom adds.

Low-impact habitat hedging can be economically attractive as well as realistically practical and environmentally useful.

‘Habitat hedging’ prioritises reuse of material while minimising waste, noise, and the use of fuel. Ideally, habitat hedgers can say they take nothing on to the site (apart from him or herself and a few tools) and take nothing away (apart from him or herself and a few tools).



Stakes and binders are sourced in the existing hedge, or nearby, while other thinnings are put back into the hedge and, or, used to create stand-alone dead hedges.

But it’s expensive to bring in stakes and binders, which may have to be sourced from long distances. Heavy traffic makes collection also time consuming. Meanwhile, it is often impossible to burn waste. Chippers are loud and guzzle energy, and skips are very expensive.

Where fill-in hedging is required, and the soil is decent, it is easy and cheap to stick in simple cuttings take from hedging material on site, or near.

It is finding strong appeal among those with responsibility for parks, nature-reserves, and some private gardens. The drawback is the first-year appearance. Depending on the available materials, it can look a bit uneven.

So it’s unlikely to win anyone any prizes at regional let alone national championships. With some justification, the ‘habitat hedging’ style may also be frowned upon by those who know a lot more about hedging than I do.

Prizes may be off the agenda, but habitat hedging is a winner in the context of the preferences and practicalities of work in large metropolitan areas. There’s broader appeal for clients everywhere eager to promote the cause of sustainability.

2022 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

THE 43<sup>RD</sup> CHAMPIONSHIP

SATURDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022

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



BY KIND PERMISSION OF CROWMARSH BATTLE FARMS

SUPREME CHAMPION

COLIN CLUTTERBUCK – NORTH SOMERSET OPEN CLASS



RESERVE SUPREME CHAMPION

MALCOLM JOHNSON – MIDLAND OPEN CLASS



## HEDGELAYING CLASS RESULTS

### Midland Open

- 1<sup>st</sup> Malcolm Johnson
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Steve Budding
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Andrew Williams
- 4<sup>th</sup> David Walker

### Yorkshire Open

- 1<sup>st</sup> David Boyson
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Jasper Prachek
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Gary Moore

### Midland Intermediate

- 1<sup>st</sup> Terry Underwood
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Guy Dibble
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Hedley Alexander

### Cheshire Open

- 1<sup>st</sup> Matthew Teece
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Heather Swift
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Colin Chapman
- 4<sup>th</sup> Stephen Yandell

### Welsh Open

- 1<sup>st</sup> Chris Davies
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Mark Pritchard
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Neville Powell

### North Somerset Open

- 1<sup>st</sup> Colin Clutterbuck
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Alex Bown
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Chris Chivers
- 4<sup>th</sup> Paul Gulliford

### South of England Open

- 1<sup>st</sup> Paul Matthews
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Nigel Adams
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Roy Champion
- 4<sup>th</sup> David Dunk

### North Somerset Intermediate

- 1<sup>st</sup> Bernard Norris
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Marie Anne Clarke
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Ben Pritchard

### South of England Intermediate

- 1<sup>st</sup> Graham West
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Rosanna Rendell
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Charles Bowerman

### Devon Open

- 1<sup>st</sup> Andrew Burrough
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Colin Risdon
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Steve McCulloch
- 4<sup>th</sup> Martin Turner

### South of England Veteran

- 1<sup>st</sup> Clive Gilligan
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lex Roeleveld

### Lancs & Westmorland Open

- 1<sup>st</sup> Pete Gibson
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Andrew Kirkwood
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Craig Proctor

### Dorset Open

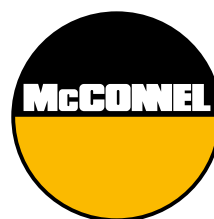
- 1<sup>st</sup> Tim Frampton
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Russell Woodham

## OTHER AWARDS

- Overall Best Veteran ..... *Steve Budding (Midland Open)*
- Best Staking & Binding – Midland Style ..... *Andrew Williams (Midland Open)*
- Best Lady Competitor ..... *Rita Jones (Welsh Open)*
- Best Work on a Poor Length ..... *Graham Teece (Midland Open)*
- Oldest Competitor ..... *Clive Matthew (Midland Open)*
- Youngest Competitor ..... *Chris Davies (Welsh Open)*
- Youngest Midland Cutter ..... *Hedley Alexander (Midland Int.)*
- Best Intermediate Cutter ..... *Graham West (SoE Int.)*
  
- Best Midland Regrowth ..... *John Exton*
- Best Regrowth – Welsh ..... *Gwyn Davies*
- Best Summer Hedge – Lancs. & Westmorland .... *Pete Gibson*
- Best Regrowth – South of England ..... *Nigel Adams*
- Best Regrowth – South of England Veteran ..... *Lex Roeleveld*
- Best Regrowth – Devon ..... *Martin Turner*
- Best Regrowth – North Somerset ..... *Paul Gulliford*
- Best Regrowth – Dorset ..... *Terry Coombe*
- Best Regrowth – Cheshire ..... *Stephen Yandell*
- Best Regrowth Overall ..... *Pete Gibson*

## CHAMPIONSHIP SPONSORS

The NHLS is grateful to the following organisations for generously sponsoring or otherwise supporting this year's NHLS National Championship



Also:  
 Mr RD Dale & Son  
 Mrs Claire Maymon

**CHAMPIONSHIP RAFFLE & DRAW**

**NATIONAL HEDGELAYING SOCIETY CHAMPIONSHIP DRAW**  
 Precursor - J Crow, Fallofield House, Bulby, Bourne, Lincs, PE10 0RU

**2021 National Hedgelaying Championship & Countryside Event**  
 Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2021

Including: Country Craft Demonstrations, Trade Stands, Refreshments etc.

**Prizes include: £100 Cash Food Hampers, Wines and Spirits Plus Many Other Prizes**

**TICKETS £1 EACH**  
 To be drawn on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2021 at Rotherfield Park Estate, Plain Farm, Alton, Hampshire GU34 3SE  
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Congratulations to **Luke Beauchamp** who won first prize.

Prizes, not collected at the event, are being distributed. Any queries should be sent to: [treasurer@hedgelaying.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@hedgelaying.org.uk)

A full list of all **48 Prize winners** is shown below.

A massive 'thank you' to everyone who supported the raffle this year.

*Jenny Crow - Raffle Officer*

	Ticket	Winner
1 <sup>st</sup>	6015	Luke Beauchamp
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2721	Russell Haliday
3 <sup>rd</sup>	2425	Clive Gilligan
4 <sup>th</sup>	8635	John Lord
5 <sup>th</sup>	1346	A & EA Evans
6 <sup>th</sup>	0380	Dawn c/o Clive
7 <sup>th</sup>	6004	Brenda Mawby
8 <sup>th</sup>	0457	Paul Martin
9 <sup>th</sup>	6235	Alan Ashby
10 <sup>th</sup>	5379	Bish
11 <sup>th</sup>	2424	Clive Gilligan
12 <sup>th</sup>	1699	Jenny Holms
13 <sup>th</sup>	6240	Alan Ashby
14 <sup>th</sup>	3785	John Exton
15 <sup>th</sup>	8621	John Lord
16 <sup>th</sup>	1649	Mr L Hopkins
17 <sup>th</sup>	7291	Alan Smith c/o Derek
18 <sup>th</sup>	7610	Roz Dale
19 <sup>th</sup>	8935	Mrs L Woodhouse
20 <sup>th</sup>	7960	Ian Connabeer
21 <sup>st</sup>	0133	Gary Moore
22 <sup>nd</sup>	8431	Adam Webb
23 <sup>rd</sup>	2091	Ned Dunbar
24 <sup>th</sup>	6117	Jeremy Bartlett

	Ticket	Winner
25 <sup>th</sup>	2241	Les Dickinson
26 <sup>th</sup>	5400	Clive Bethell
27 <sup>th</sup>	3759	John Carlisle
28 <sup>th</sup>	1185	Harry Burton
29 <sup>th</sup>	9998	Shirley Strugnell
30 <sup>th</sup>	1270	M Ferrett
31 <sup>st</sup>	1923	Mr Humphrey
32 <sup>nd</sup>	0606	Paul Keel
33 <sup>rd</sup>	2480	Caroline Gibson
34 <sup>th</sup>	1361	Tom Evans
35 <sup>th</sup>	4011	David Job
36 <sup>th</sup>	8942	John Woodhouse
37 <sup>th</sup>	1925	Rachel Humphrey
38 <sup>th</sup>	0455	Paul Martin
39 <sup>th</sup>	2145	Andy Dudley
40 <sup>th</sup>	5699	Chapman
41 <sup>st</sup>	3698	Mandy Woodham
42 <sup>nd</sup>	0384	Sharon c/o Clive
43 <sup>rd</sup>	3503	West
44 <sup>th</sup>	3799	Richardson
45 <sup>th</sup>	7368	S Simmonds
46 <sup>th</sup>	2354	Minkie
47 <sup>th</sup>	3549	Carter
48 <sup>th</sup>	3272	Mr G M Kelly



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.

- Rugby Shirt (Navy/Bottle Green)..... £26.00
- Polo Shirt (Navy/Bottle Green/Maroon) ..... £18.00
- Fleece (Navy/Bottle Green/Maroon) ..... £21.00
- Beanie Hat (Navy/Bottle Green/Maroon)..... £7.75
- Baseball Cap (Navy/Bottle Green/Maroon) ..... £7.75
- 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 National Championship and over the last year.*



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

## COTSWOLD NOVEMBER TASTER DAY

*Claire Maymon*

On a gloriously warm and sunny November morning, a new group of people turned up for the latest Cotswold Taster Day. With the kind assistance of Tony Wilsdon, Russ Parker and Guy Lock we were very fortunate to have a wealth of skilled and experienced hedge layers on hand to show our enthusiastic crowd how to lay a hedge.



The double line planted 16 year old mixed native hedge has been very well kept by Billy the farmer and we appreciated the lack of weeds, ivy and brambles that he has kept at bay.

We had several ladies cutting including and all credit must be given to Honor and Millie who would not allow the use of chainsaws at all! In the heat of the late Autumn day and working only by hand they get very involved under Tony's watchful eye.

We laid the next 60 metres of the hedge and having had help from our President, Mr Dale with the Binders, a group of 3 wanderers appeared from over the field. What a bonus! It was our

Chairman, Joe, Secretary David and top cutter, Andrew Kirkwood who were passing by after a meeting they had attended locally. I was very honoured to have their attendance and grateful for their constructive comments.

We enjoyed another lovely day learning all about hedgelaying and with luck have signed up some new members.

The next event, probably the last on this beautiful stretch of hedge will be on 25<sup>th</sup> February.



## DEVON RURAL SKILLS HEDGING COMPETITION *Don Gaskins*

The DRST held our 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Hedging Competition at Hillhead Farm, Ugborough near Ivybridge on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> of October by kind permission of David and Jane Johns.

We were very lucky with the weather as the site was on an exposed ridge with wide views across to Ugborough Beacon and Western Beacon on the southern edge of Dartmoor. After a few early showers the day was dry with sunny spells and ideal for hedging. Different from the preparation day when a cold north east wind kept us on our toes.

Despite competition from the NHLS Charity Event in Hampshire held on the same day, we had a good turnout of twenty three cutters with good support from, as usual, the Bandits from the Blackdowns, the Mendip Marauders. There were also competitors from West Cornwall and Dorset who usually make off with the Cups and Prize money. It was also good to have a larger than usual number of spectators.

Despite a wet day before the event, parking wasn't a problem. The hedge was ideal for the job being on a mainly low bank which made steeping easy. It comprised mainly hazel, hawthorn and blackthorn with a few oak and sycamore saplings and one large ash tree with sparse growth under the canopy which was left out of the competition. Chainsaw stewards were on hand to take out awkward material and to clear growth on the adjacent lane verge. Farmer Dave was kept busy during the afternoon using a front end grab on the tractor to clear away brush and keep the road clear. He manages his hedges to produce timber for a woodchip boiler which provides heating to three dwellings.



Rob Wolton



Rob Wolton

Judges Ian Connabeer (Open Class) and Peter Yeates (Intermediate/Veterans) had a difficult job separating the contestants with some really good work on show. In the former, thirteen points covered the nine cutters and in the latter a mere six points separated ten competitors. Although we get quite a few younger people on our training days only four took part in the Novice Class judged by Bruce Baker. It's a shame that more don't enter the contest. That being said, overall there seems to be more and more interest in hedgelaying which is satisfying and a good omen for the future.

In the Open Class Andy Burrough took first place by half a point from runner up Colin Clutterbuck with Martin Turner coming third. Tina Bath was fourth and also won the Di Smurthwaite Ladies cup. George Pidgeon was a popular winner of the Intermediate/Veteran Class with Rob Sturme second and Steve Eldridge third. DRST trainee Joseph Orpen won the Novice Class with Richard Stark second and Tim Wills third. Adrian Mills took the Jack Connabeer Cup and Tess Stone the Regrowth Cup from the 2019 competition. Jamie Ranson was awarded the certificate for best work on a poor length.

Altogether a very pleasant and satisfying day. Many thanks to all who organised and took part in the event.

## YORKSHIRE HEDGELAYING COMPETITION

THE YORKSHIRE HEDGELAYING ASSOCIATION ANNUAL COMPETITION

WENT VERY WELL +STOP+ LOVELY WEATHER +STOP+ A RECORD

TURNOUT OF NOVICES +STOP+ RGDS CHARLIE



*Dean Bradley's Winning Length in the Open Class*



*Intermediate Class Won by James Benson*



*Novice Winner Steve Britten's Work*

## ROYAL WELSH SHOW

It started with a phone call.

At very short notice, 3 days, we were first asked to do a hedging demo at the Royal Welsh Show in 2019. It was their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we were told that the then HRH Prince Charles would be in attendance and would like to see it. No pressure!

It was a privilege to be asked back again this year, in 2022.

The three of us, Brian Price, Neville Powell and Mark Pritchard, have somehow become known as the Three Ps. We have grown up together and attend several hedging matches throughout Wales and the Herefordshire Border, either helping, competing or training.

How do you do a hedging demonstration in the middle of the summer? Well, together, we managed to get some wood that had not

been cleared up from a hedge that had been done in the Spring. We had to plant a false hedgerow, and then actually pleach it to demonstrate hedgelaying to the general public.

There was a lot of interest and discussion from attendees from all over the world.

Questions covered a range of topics: how can you plant a hedge, if you don't understand how to mix your plants, space them out, manage it and lay it in the local style? Why don't they teach rural skills in our schools and colleges? (They used to locally) Are stakes and wire sustainable? The importance of pollen for bees from our hedges and hedgerow flowers.

We explained that the importance of creating a strong and firm stockproof hedge is paramount, especially in the Welsh upland areas and along the borders. Here, the hedges can be slower growing and have to withstand the harsh winter conditions, cold, gales, blizzards and snow drifts.

Most hedges would have been ditched and banked as well.

The ancient craft of the Welsh Border style, which has been handed down through the generations, has shaped the small irregular field boundaries in our valleys over thousands of years and has stood the test of time, creating our beautiful landscape that we have here today.

The hedge has to protect the new growth coming from the fresh pleach at its base. You also have to utilise all the different varieties of trees in the hedgerow, taking into consideration the large clumps or gaps. To achieve an even and consistent hedge, we use boughs, backing and brush (often referred to as deadwood) in a very specific pattern.





Any new plants/trees used in the gaps, will then be protected by the brush, often doing away with the need for plastic tree guards etc.

The use of stakes driven into the ground at an angle in the middle and heatherings along the top, to tie the hedge down, gives it the final tight and secure finish. The stakes and heatherings would have traditionally been cut out from the original hedge, or coppiced from a nearby tree, with any spare wood being used as firewood.

As the new growth steadily takes over, the deadwood gradually rots away.

The importance of hedgerows has come to the forefront again as a positive way of tackling climate change. Hedges were created first and foremost as practical livestock and field boundaries, but with nature being very opportunist and very adaptable they have become a very important wildlife haven. They provide safe and secure nesting sites for our birds, and homes for our mammals. Not only do they provide a rich and varied food source for both us and wildlife, but the rotting deadwood is home to a large variety of bugs, beetles and insects.

Although fencing is a good management tool these days, there is a worry that the rubbish growing up between the fence and hedge can have a negative impact on the hedge and the natural hedgerow wildflowers.

With all the different recognised hedgelaying styles, as we promote this ancient craft, we should all learn and appreciate their regional differences.

Finally, our take home impression from these demonstrations is that hedgelaying is probably one of the few topics that can bring people from very different backgrounds together.



WORDSEARCH

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

- EAR PROTECTION
- WELDERS MITTS
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- FROE
- HATCHET
- STAKES
- STIHL
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**THE FIRST COMPLETE WORD SEARCH TO BE MAILED TO THE EDITOR AT [NEWSLETTER@HEDGELAYING.ORG.UK](mailto:NEWSLETTER@HEDGELAYING.ORG.UK) WINS A BOTTLE OF WHYTE + MACKAY SCOTCH.**

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**THE WINNER OF THE SUMMER WORDSEARCH WAS ???**



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