



Hedge Laying

Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th October 2019

Course Outline

On this course you will learn the traditional skill of hedge laying and how to safely use the hand-tools necessary for the job. You will then get to practise your skills on a section of hedge.

Hedge laying is a traditional skill practised for centuries in the British landscape. The idea behind laying, or “pleaching”, a hedge is to maintain it as a stock-proof barrier – before the development of wire fences it was the way to keep livestock within a field. The basic premise is that living plants are cut part-through near the ground, allowing the stem to then be laid to the side and woven between supporting hedging stakes. The plant then grows new vertical shoots from the diagonal stem. This grows to form a lattice that stock cannot push through.

Hedges that are not maintained in this way develop gaps at the base meaning that they are no longer stock-proof. Hedge laying ensures that the hedge retains the thickness at the base and stops the hedge becoming a row of trees. The form of a laid hedge not only allows it to meet its purpose as a barrier, it also makes the hedge both a valuable wildlife habitat and a wildlife corridor that allows birds, animals and insects to move through the landscape within cover.

This is an introductory course aimed at beginners and no previous experience is necessary. You will learn the basics of hedge laying so that you can use your new skills on your own land or perhaps to enable you to volunteer with a conservation organisation. After a weekend course you won't become the Hedge Laying National Champion (yes, there is one) but it could be the first step on the journey...

Course Tutor

The course tutor is KTAT Volunteer Chris Gurney. Chris's day job is Project Officer for the *Wye and Usk Foundation*, a rivers trust that improves the ecology, habitat and water quality of those rivers. Chris began learning about conservation management when studying for an Apprenticeship in Environmental Conservation with his previous employer, the *South Downs National Park Authority*. Chris is a regular volunteer with KTAT and the local *Wildlife Trusts*.



<http://tveg.org.uk/wordpress/what-we-do/woodland-project>

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