

## Hedge Laying Winter 2001

Of all the Conservation activities we undertake hedgelaying is probably the most important in terms of the benefits for wildlife. A layered hedge provides a superb nesting habitat for birds and a wonderful corridor for many groups of plants and animals. The public appreciates their neatness and farmers value them as stock proof barriers. Hawthorn growing singly as a tree has a life expectancy of less than 100 years, but the oldest hedges in the country are in excess of 600 years old. Continuously laying hedge not only keeps them going indefinitely, but also maximises the value for wildlife. Other methods of management, clipping pruning etc produce a less valuable habitat

Flash, Leigh. Several members of the public turned up are now laying their own hedges. The course was well publicised, courtesy of the wardens and we were well paid £100 for our efforts.

Another first arrived by way of a phone call. Bolton Metro asked us to lay a hedge at Metal Box Co. Westhoughton. They agreed to pay us £350. We managed to lay half the hedge this winter so I've claimed £175. We did our usual hedge laying at Rumworth and were paid £50. In total this winter, we are £325 better off, as a result of our hedge laying activities. Over the years we have amassed a very comprehensive

at last beginning to be appreciated.

Next winter we can repeat the course at Pennington, finish the hedge at Metal Box and do our usual stint at Rumworth, there is also a possibility of laying a hedge at Chewmoor, Lostock. I think the big challenge next winter will be to balance our various activities. We need a varied programme with some hedge laying, hedge and tree planting and other woodland management projects. Some members, like me, cannot get enough. Others are not so keen. Perhaps extra hedge laying slots for the very enthusiastic might be the best way forward. Whatever that we decide I'm sure we'll enjoy a varied and prosperous winter programme.



The winter of 2001 represented a real milestone in terms of what the group achieved on the hedge laying front. For the first time ever we organised a hedge-laying course at Pennington

collection of hedge laying tools, the money will help us to keep them in good order. Twenty years of practise at hedge laying has allowed us to develop a level of expertise, which is

Hedges as habitat are quite well represented in Bolton Borough, and a high percentage would benefit from laying. But unfortunately very little active laying is currently being undertaken, which makes our own contribution so vital. In particular it's very important to continue to train new hedgelayers. Ever thought what things will be like in 100 years time? Will the ancient art still be practised? I would like to think that our efforts this winter will help to ensure the Boroughs hedges continue to be maintained as prime wildlife habitats.

**Rick Parker**

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## Chew Moor and Lostock Conservation Volunteers

The newly formed, Chew Moor and Lostock Conservation Volunteers have recently contacted me. They have acquired the lease on a small wood and meadow adjacent to Rumworth Lodge. They intend to undertake conservation work in both areas and have approached us for help and advice.

The wood in question is in a poor state on account of half of it being flattened to develop a car park and changing facility for a five-a-side set up. The Bolton WAG and woodland sections vigorously opposed the development, but it was allowed to proceed. The meadow itself is undamaged and home to a good stand of

Autumn Crocuses.

I have responded positively to the request for help and intend to arrange a site visit very shortly, Graham and Jane have agreed to join me. We can offer practical advice regarding work on the woodland but may need to seek expert advice regarding the meadow. They also need help with hedge laying again we can arrange a training day and a loan of tools. I fully intend to give our newly acquired "green buddies" a helping hand. Perhaps Gary's presentation on the work of the BCV might also be appreciated.

**Rick Parker**