

The Windrow

Newsletter of The Scything Association of Britain and Ireland

No 13 April 2018



Windrow NO 13 May 2018

New! Childrens scythe courses at the West Country Sythe Fair

See Page 3

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SABI NEWS



International Peening Day

International Peening Day this year fell on Easter Day 1st April 2018.

It's An 'everywhere-event' — except for people in the Southern Hemisphere — its aims are to remind people to prepare their scythes in advance of the mowing season and provide support by encouraging them to meet and peen together.

Alas by the time you read this International peening day will have passed. Fortunately Richard Brown the organiser and host has written a postscript of the event which you can find here:- <http://scytheassociation.org/peening-days/>

New Scythe Book

On May Day 2018, Peter Vido and his family released a new book on scythes, titled

"The Big Book of the Scythe, Part 1".

This comprehensive instructional book is being provided at no charge, as a free download from their Scythe Connection website and related sites. It's still a work in progress, but the information is there, even if it's currently a little "rough around the edges". The four-part project will be ongoing, with occasional releases of improved versions of Part 1, along with the future development of the subsequent Parts 2, 3, and 4, with each part having a different focus, as outlined here:

<http://scytheconnection.com/the-big-book-of-the-scythe-a-brief-outline/>

A paperback version is also being produced as a fundraiser for scythe introduction to small farmers in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

This link can be used to download the book as a PDF file:

<http://scytheconnection.com/scwp/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Part-1-Version-1.0-2018-05-01-1.pdf>

TRAINING COURSES

Monkton Wyld Court Dorset

Two day scythe courses

19th- 20th May and 16th-17th Sept

Courses content includes scythe use, haymaking and grassland management. B and B on site.

For more info go to:-

www.thescytheshop.co.uk/courses.html

or email scythes@myphone.coop

Skyegrove, Herodsfoot, Cornwall

Beginners scything course

19th May and 28th Jul 2018

Improvers scything course

1st September 2017

Course tutor Kevin Austin

Both courses cost £65 and include lunch. Alternatively, if you prefer, we can come to your land to deliver the course for a group of students (6 max) the cost is £200. For further info go to:- www.skyegrove.co.uk
email kevin@skyegrove.co.uk
or Phone:- Kevin Austin 07943 653825

Dorset Wildlife Trust

Beginners Scything Course

Saturday 21st July 2018

with Chris Riley

Accommodation and camping available.

Information:- https://www.kingcombe.org/Scything_Workshop-22_Jul_2017.html

Bookings:- <https://www.kingcombe.org/bookhere.html>

Community Haystacks

Walthamstow Marshes

Waterworks Centre off Lea

Bridge Road.

Beginners Course

Saturday 5th June 2018

Refresher Course

Tuesday 12th June

The courses will run from 10am -1pm. Costs £25 (concession £15). To book a place e-mail kathrin@myvillages.org

Why struggle?

Learn how to get your blades sharp and to scythe expertly with the

Improvers' Masterclass

at the

West Country Scythe Fair

Friday 8th - Saturday 9th June 2018

A course for:-

- Mowers with some experience who want to develop their skills;
- Team leaders managing volunteers or staff;
- People who want to teach scythe use to others.

You will get personal attention from three of the most experienced teachers in the UK: Christiane Laganda, scythe and yoga teacher from Austria; Phil Batten master peener and scythe competition winner from Scythe Cymru and Steve Tomlin author of the definitive scythe manual 'Learn to Scythe'.

The cost is £140 for individuals, £165 for organizations, £90 concession for unwaged. Lunches are provided. Camping on site is available.

Beginners course

Saturday 9th June 2018

with Kevin Austin and Andi Ricard.

This course covers scythe set-up, mowing and sharpening in the morning; peening, plus workshops on hay making by hand, grassland management and the English scythe in the afternoon.

The cost is £65 per person, including lunch.

Children's course

9 June, 2.30- 4.30pm

with

Christiane Laganda, Fiona Pollock and Jeremy Hastings. For children from 8 years to 14 years old. Scythes will be supplied, using small blades. £15
Email Simon Fairlie scythes@myphone.coop

The venue for all three courses is at Thorney Lakes. Muchelney, near Langport <http://www.thorneylakes.co.uk/>

For a programme and other information please see: <http://www.thescytheshop.co.uk/festival.html>

To book, email Mary Ellis

beginnersscythecourse@gmail.com or by telephone on 01297 561359 for the beginners and childrens course.

To book the improvers course email Simon Fairlie atscythes@myphone.coop or phone 01297 561359

Wimpole Scything Course

Saturday 23 June 2018

This course is always popular so early booking is recommended. Tel.: 0844 249 1895 (7 days a week 9am —5.30pm) or book online by following the link in:-
<https://sadeik.wordpress.com/blog/about/mowing/>

A Real Opportunity!

Pentiddy Woods Internship

New for 2018!

Having been WWOOF hosts for over 10 years we have decided to expand what we offer to provide a more focused and valuable experience. The Pentiddy Woods Internship is an opportunity to join our family for 9 months living off-grid on an established experimental woodland smallholding.

From October each year through to the following July we are offering a full, rounded experience in sustainable living. You will be trained in numerous essential skills for setting up your own project. There will be a small training budget for off-site courses, free weekends (except during hay-making time!), 1 day each week for more flexible study or skills learning with 4 days a week helping on a variety of interesting tasks around the land. We will tailor your training to fit with your interests and requirements.

Internship at Pentiddy

Each season there will also be trips to the Green Scythe Fair and the National Coppice Federation AGM amongst others. There are plenty of interesting places to visit fairly locally such as the Eden Project, Landmatters Community, Agroforestry Research Trust, Keveral Farm Community...

"I've been at Pentiddy since the start of 2017. My stay so far has been amazing and I am continuing to learn a million and one bits of knowledge and practical skills in all aspects of a sustainable lifestyle, ranging from digging a leach drain system connecting the grey water system to the polytunnel, to pollarding Lime trees in the community coppice and four part harmony singing around the dinner table. Come here if you love living in tune with everything around you and working outdoors. It's amazing!"

Hannan Currah

"I had done almost a years worth of WWOOFing at about a dozen different places when I came here for a month. I'm still here 2 years later and intend to be here for a fair while yet! Rarely is there such a combination of good work, good people and good learning. Being here for longer and seeing the seasons change has been particularly valuable to me in understanding the effects of decisions made and work done on a permaculture smallholding. The deep learning over this period has been invaluable."

Tim Radja

We can only offer 2 places each year, and we would obviously prefer you to visit beforehand if possible. Please in the first instance apply in writing or by e-mail. mail@pentiddy.co.uk. Pentiddy Woods, Attwood Lane, Pensilva, Liskeard. Cornwall. PL145QU.

For further information on this please visit www.pentiddy.co.uk/pentiddywoods/volunteers/ or click on the image for more detail.

SCYTHING EVENTS

The Fourteenth West Country Scythe Festival

and
Green Fair

SUNDAY Thorney Lakes, Muchelney,
10 JUNE 2018 Langport, Somerset, TA10 0DW

SCYTHE CHAMPIONSHIP

- Team Mowing
- Haymaking
- Scything Instruction
- Crafts • Stalls
- Scythes for Sale
- Tools and Tat
- Campaigns • Speakers
- Kid's Area • Hay for Play
- 2 Music Stages • Ceilidh
- Organic food • Two Bars

ENTRY: £5 Per Person
plus £5 per car
**KIDS
FREE**



SCYTHE COURSES

Improver's Masterclass 8-9 June
Beginner's Course 9 June
plus workshops on haymaking, grassland
management and the English scythe.

NEW FEATURE THIS YEAR!

Scythe Training for Kids

Saturday 9 June

Parking and Camping on Site

More information: 01297 561359
chapter7@tlio.org.uk
www.thescytheshop.co.uk/
www.greenfair.org.uk

Green Scythe Fair Camping

Scythers overnighing at the Green Scythe Fair are encouraged to use the enlarged Scythers' Camp in the field to ease pressure on the official Thorney Lakes campsite. This is also available to those on both the scythe courses. Here are the options:

Thorney Lakes Caravan and Camping Park – open every day, fine flat pitches of mown grass, full range of facilities close by, £17 per night for up to two persons. See thorneylakes.co.uk for additional information, the full range of charges and booking. Saturday night (9th June) must be booked in advance to avoid disappointment.

Scythers Camp – available Thursday night through Sunday night (8th-11th June). The field will be mown, but ground conditions are variable. Facilities are basic (composting loos, water standpipe) and further away. £5 per person per night, plus Fair entry fees. If you would like to stay at the Scythers' Camp please me know beforehand so that we can gauge numbers, and pay me (not Thorney Lakes site office) on arrival.

Volunteers helping with the set up (some from around Wednesday) get free camping at the Scythers' Camp. If you would like to participate in this way please contact me so that jobs can be organised. Thank you.

Chris Riley: chris@pratensis.net Tel 07719 691312

Ninth Eastern Counties Scythe Festival Wimpole, Cambridgeshire 23th - 24th June 2018



A weekend on the National Trust Wimpole Estate's windflower meadow overlooking the Capability Brown park.

The only event in the UK where you can enter in competitions varying from 5m x 5m, 10m x 10m through quarter of an acre all the way to the full acre.

Demonstrations of blacksmithing, greenwood working and other rural crafts.

Basic free camping is available and there are spaces for stallholders (free if you demonstrate, otherwise there is a fee).

For more information go to <https://sadeik.wordpress.com/mowing-2/> or email Simon.Damant@nationaltrust.org.uk

Wimpole Practice Sessions Wimpole Estate, Cambridgeshire

SABI members are invited to join our informal mowings during June, July and August.

This is a chance to improve your mowing skills while cutting some of our better meadows to provide "green hay" to spread wildflower seed to other parts of the estate.

We plan meet in the evenings. For more information contact Jim McVittie (dalefield@ntlworld.com).

Meadow Connections and the Northern Scythe Championships

14th - 15th July 2018

Set in the beautiful and ancient meadows
of Lower Winskill Farm, Settle. North
Yorkshire

A weekend long celebration of upland hay meadows
Meadow Connections hopes to bring people together to enjoy
and learn more about the beautiful upland hay meadows of the
Yorkshire Dales so they might be protected and enjoyed for
generations to come.

A Day of land based skills, art and craft workshops on
Saturday. Herbal Medicine, flora and fauna identification,
scything, pottery, drawing, dry stone walling, jewellery making
Small scale dairy farming and cheesemaking .
Evening feast and ceilidh on Saturday night with bar provided
by the local brewery.
Northern Scythe Championships on Sunday 15th including
farm history talks and herbal walks.



Tickets must be bought in advance. Whole weekend and day
tickets available.

More information and ticket prices can be found at www.meadowconnections.co.uk
or send email to meadowconnections@gmail.com
Alternatively call Ruth on 07951 399176

Community Haystacks West Common, Lincoln Saturday 7th July 2018

Community Haystacks is a celebration of ancient common land it brings together residents to recreate the pre-mechanical hay harvest & revive traditions of scything & commoning. 'Haystacks' are nomadic events held to present & talk about rural issues & practices in urban places.

The West Common an area of some 100 hectares in Witham Valley Country Park. It represents eleven percent of the Lincoln's neutral grassland and marsh resource, and supports a population of skylark.

Programme

Scything Workshops 10-12pm, 12:30-2:30pm

You must be over 16 to take part in the scything workshops and competition.

The courses are free but you must register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-haystacks-scything-workshop-tickets-45811847469> for the 10am - 12pm course. To register for the 12:30-2:30pm course use this url to book:- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-haystacks-scything-workshop-tickets-45811859505?aff=es2>. Courses provided by Clive Leeke

Commons and Commoning. Discussion 2-3pm

Bring your own picnic and join us for an informal talk from invited guests about the history of the land and related cultures of commoning.

Scything Competition 3-4pm

With local food prizes for best windrow, best quality sward, best overall performance & style. You Must be over 16 years of age to enter the competition

Haystack Building 12-4pm

Come along to help us build a large community haystack. Bring your own picnic and join a guided tour around the West Common at 1pm.

Throughout the Day

An area will be dedicated to scything which will be open to those who already know how to scythe.

The 25th Haymaking Festival at Ryghsetra, Buskerud County, Norway

14th - 15th July 2018

A course in the practical and theoretical management of ecologically important hay meadows, at Ryghsetra, Buskerud County, Norway. (In Norwegian: Slåttekurset på Ryghsetra.)

Organiser Naturvernforbundet i Buskerud ('The Nature Conservation Society'). The course has been running since 1994.

The course takes place over the second weekend in July, from Thursday afternoon to Sunday, finishing about 16.00. (Editors note: Please double check on the dates as the 1st July 2018 falls on a Sunday)

The venue is at Ryghsetra, a small farm in the municipality of Nedre Eiker, in Buskerud County. The farm is situated about 60km west of Oslo. The nearest village is Mjøndalen, and the nearest city is Drammen.

Accommodation is at Solsetra, a well-equipped mission centre right next door to Ryghsetra farm. Sleeping is arranged in double or triple bedrooms (bring sleeping equipment or sleeping bag), and there are WCs, showers, a large dining room and course auditorium. Our very good kitchen team makes all the meals. We can take up to 30-35 participants, and in addition there are about 30 helpers (including children and teenagers).

Editors note: (There's limited spaces for those outside Norway as it's a county sponsored event. So book early)

The wonderful botanically-rich hay meadow at Ryghsetra is characterised by the following:

No fertilizers are used

No chemicals (pesticides etc.) are used

The soil is left unploughed

Parts of the meadow have a very high biodiversity regarding the plants, fungi and insect life

During the course we mow with scythes the 3ha meadow, and stack the grass for drying on specially-built wood and wire hay-drying racks (in Norwegian: 'hesjing'). In addition, you will be invited to:

Learn to recognise the characteristic wildlife species of an ecologically important hay meadow.

Learn more about the traditional management of such important hay meadows.

Learn about the practical use of the scythe: how to put it together, how to sharpen it and keep it sharp, and how to cut the grass.

Participate in discussions and learn from people with practical experience in management of ecologically-

important farming landscapes. The course has become a national and international meeting place for people interested in such 'High Nature Value' (HNV) grasslands.

Briefly learn about the theoretical and practical management and establishment of pollarded trees.

Gain ideas for yourself on how to organise such courses involving practical work.

Learn much about the history and culture of the Old Norwegian farming landscape.

During parts of the course the participants might be divided into two groups, depending on their preferred language.



Getting there

Ryghsetra, is about 70 km west of Oslo, and 4 km from the nearest village, Mjøndalen. There are hourly trains from Oslo central station passing Mjøndalen. The journey takes less than one hour. (The same line also serves the main Oslo Gardermoen airport, if you are flying into Oslo that way. The journey time is then about 1½h). The course organisers will happily make agreements to pick you up from the railway station, if contacted in advance.

For a detailed program see Page 17

Course fees

Adult: 3_000 Norwegian kroner (NOK)

Other adults in the family /partner: 2_250 NOK

Student,/youth (15-20 years): 1_750 NOK

Child, aged 0 - 15 years: 1_000 NOK

Maximum fee, family: 6_500 NOK

N.B. The fee includes all food and accommodation during the course.

Bookings

Contact County secretary: Per Øystein Klunderud

Phone ++ 47 / 32 75 05 04 mob: ++ 47 948 86 503

email: pedrokl@online.no

Sat 7th July
10 to 4
The Bog
Pennerley
SY5 0NG

Shropshire Hills Hay Meadow festival

A fun filled family day to celebrate
traditional wildflower meadows
and their wealth of wildlife.

Guided WALKS and talks
SCYTHING demonstrations
& competitions
ARTS & CRAFTS
MUSIC & merriment
& more...

Entry:
Adults: £5
Children free

Shropshire Hills
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

60 years of the
Shropshire Hills
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

NATURAL
ENGLAND

For more information go to www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk

Detailed Programme

26th Haymaking Festival Ryghsetra, Norway

Thursday

16.00 - 18.00 Arrival & lodging. Time for the first visit into the meadow?

18.00 - 19.00 Dinner.

Followed by welcome and presentation of participants, course co-workers and practical information.

19.00 - 21.30 Walk into the meadow. The grass is put on the first hay-drying rack!

21.30 - Social intercourse, inside or outside.

Friday

08.00 - 09.00 Breakfast

09.00 - 11.30 Basic introduction to the scythe. Practical demonstration of cutting and sharpening.

11.30 - 12.00 Coffee and cakes in the meadow.

12.00 - 14.00 Group A: Further instruction in use of the scythe & cutting. Group B: Botany and fauna in the meadow.

14.00 - 15.15 Dinner

15.15 - 17.15 Group A: Botany and fauna in the meadow. Group B: Further instruction in use of the scythe & cutting. Making bread in the old oven.

17.30 - 18.30 Working together, mowing and putting grass on the hay-drying rack.

19.00 - 20.00 Supper

21.00 - Social intercourse.

Saturday

06.00 - 07.30 Morning coffee/bath and "early morning" cutting of the grass in the meadow.

07.30 - 08.30 Breakfast

08.30 - 10.00 Continuing working.

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The 6th Annual Community Haystacks Day

Walthamstow Marshes, East London; Sun 30th of June 2018

Programme

IN THE RUN UP

Ida will be running two scything workshops at the Waterworks Centre off Lea Bridge Road.

5th June (Beginners) and 12th June (Refresher),

The courses will run from 10am - 1pm.

Costs £25 (concession £15).

To book a place e-mail kathrin@myvillages.org

ON THE DAY

LEARN HOW TO SCYTHE 10:30 - 12:30

With local super scyther Ida Fabrizio.

Refreshments and equipment are provided.

£20 (concessions £10) per two hour session.

To book a place e-mail kathrin@myvillages.org

SCYTHING COMPETITION 1:00 - 2:30 pm

We are running a scything competition on the marshes – sharpen your blades and join us for some urban mowing.

Prizes from local manufacturers.

RANGER RAMBLE 1:00 - 3:00pm

Join a guided tour around the marshes with park ranger Eamonn Lawlor.

HAYSTACK AND PICNIC 1:00 - 3:00pm

Come and help us build a large community haystack on the marshes.

Bring your own picnic and enjoy some outdoor music.

GREEN COMMONS 4:00 - 5:00pm

Join us for an informal talk with invited guests about cultures of commoning, Nature Deficit Syndrome in the city and doing things for the "good of the village".

THROUGHOUT

A large area of the marshes will be open to those who already know how to scythe.



COURSE DIRECTORY

Teachers marked with an asterisk usually have scythes for sale.

For courses on the English Scythe see Mark Allery.

Northern England

*Steve Tomlin**

stevetomlin8@gmail.com

SteveTomlinCrafts.wordpress.com/learn-to-scythe
Practical, fun courses covering all the skills to use and maintain your scythe. I am an internationally respected scythe expert, author of *Learn to Scythe* and sell scythe kits. I can travel to teach you or your group at your venue. Subscribe to my newsletter for more dates. Email stevetomlin8@gmail.com to book
Learn to Scythe 2nd June or 10th Aug at Sedbergh, Cumbria

Learn to Scythe 1st Jun 22nd July at Slaidburn, Lancashire

Learn to Scythe 15th June at Hullard Park, Manchester

Peening workshop 12th Oct at Slaidburn, Lancashire

John Robson Grundy

Burnopfield, County Durham.

wildernesstamed@hotmail.co.uk

County Durham, Northumberland the Borders. John has taught around England National Trust, local community groups, Sustrans and Northumberland Wildlife Trust staff and volunteers. Courses are arranged by the individual or group. Discounts available for charities. Full day and half day courses. Details at www.wildernesstamed.com

*Jez Hastings**

Peak District jeremyhastings@me.com

Way of the Scythe Courses www.jeremyhastings.uk

Way of the Scythe 7th April Billbrook Meadows. Codsall Staffs.

Way of the Scythe (scything, Peening and haymaking) 2nd- 6th July RSPB Coombes Valley Leek

*Jonathan Dent**

York, North Yorkshire jonathan@stnicks.org.uk 01904 411821

Learn to scythe with a focus on improving the wildlife value of meadows, grasslands and woodland edge. I have 8 years' experience in teaching volunteers groups and individuals throughout Yorkshire including orchards in Leeds, woodland meadows near Scarborough, cycle path greenways for Sustrans and numerous urban meadows across York.

One day tailored workshops for groups at your greenspace – £250 + travel

One to one training sessions available

St Nicks Meadow Keepers project is running training courses across York throughout 2018 for greenspace groups and interested individuals. Get in touch to find out more or check our website for dates when announced.

Wales

*David Kuegler**

Parry's Meadow, Orcop Hill, Hereford

david.kuegler@btinternet.com

Learn Scything, Sharpening & Peening, cutting meadows, mowing around trees. Steve Tomlin's 'Learn to Scythe book', is covered. Home cooked lunch on course (John Letts 'bread'). Will travel to teach in your Field or

Orchard. 1:1 or up to 1:6....as one client said this last year: "I feel empowered".

2016 Meadows Day: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CRFQ6RH5Zc&feature=youtu.be>

Scything equipment provided, Scythe Kits to purchase; made to fit peening pony & meadow products.

Learn to Scythe @ Orcop Hill, Hereford, Course Dates: (from £50.00, including lunch)

April 7th, May 12th, July 7th, Scything, Sharpening &

Peening April - August drop-in-evening sessions,

Wednesdays 5:30 - 7:30pm

Jun Special Sything Day TBA, Hereford.

*Phillip Batten**

Dyfed Permaculture Farm Trust, Carmarthenshire

scythecymru@yahoo.co.uk www.scythecymru.co.uk

Learn to scythe or improve your skills. Workshops give you lots of hands on experience; a chance to "try before you buy" or get your own scythe set up well; a visit to a smallholding where the scythe is integral to the management and is used year round in a variety of situations.

Introductory Scythe Courses – Saturday 26th May (Fully Booked), Sun 1st July, Wed 1st July and Sat 25th August - £60 / £50 (low wage concession)

Peening and Sharpening Workshops – Sun 8th April, Wed 20th June, Sat 2nd July, – £50 / £40 (low wage concession)

"Mowing with Ease" Improvers Workshop – Sun 29th July, can be combined with the Penning workshop on Sat 28th with a 10% discount on both courses.

*Andrea Gilpin**

Wild Meadow, Discoed, Presteigne, Powys

hello@wildmeadow.co

Learn to scythe, sharper and peen or come to improve your skills.

Courses are held at our 3.5 acre meadow with a variety of situations to practice on.

1:1 also available. Equipment provided. Scythe kits available to purchase.

Learn to scythe – Beginners Sat 12th May, Sun 24th June, Sat 11th August – £50 Other dates to be confirmed.

Scything for improvers – Sun 22nd July (more dates to follow) – £50

Past/present students/local scythers invited to a mid summer get together (see website)

www.wildmeadow.co

*Simon Cooter**

The Stiperstones, Shropshire,

simon.cooter@naturalengland.org.uk

I am the reserve manager and run scythe courses held at the Stiperstones National Nature Reserve. Learn the joy of using an Austrian scythe to cut grass, bracken and rushes. Also learn about managing and restoring flower rich hay meadows. All equipment provided, or bring your own.

Introductory scythe course, The Stiperstones, 5th July – £50

South West England

*Chris Riley**

(North Dorset) chris@pratensis.net 07719 691312

www.pratensis.net

Available for scythe training in the Wessex area, and beyond.

For the following beginners' courses, see the relevant web sites for info and to book. Scythes available for purchase. Contact me direct if you are intending to buy (no

obligation) and with other questions.
 Northleach, North Glos. Wed 16th May and Sat 11th
 August 2018 www.cotswoldsruralskills.org.uk
 Carymoor, near Castle Cary, Somerset Tues/Wed 29th/
 30th May 2018 This funded course is free and is a two day
 course (participants must attend both days).
www.carymoor.org.uk/events-and-courses/an-introduction-to-scything-29th-and-30th-may
 Winchester, Hampshire Tues 5th June 2018
www.hiwwt.org.uk/whats-on
 Kingham Hill School, Oxfordshire Wed 11th July 2018
www.cotswoldsruralskills.org.uk
 Kingcombe Centre, Dorset. Sat 2nd Jul 2018.
www.kingcombe.org
 Friary, near Bath. Wed 1st September 2018.
www.cotswoldsruralskills.org.uk

Andi Rickard*

andirickard@me.com 0758 1239453
 Ladies UK Scything Champion since 2010, now in my
 sixth year of teaching throughout the South West.
 Course dates booked by arrangement, one-to-one sessions
 or group bookings, £70 per person or £275 per group. I
 am also available to come and teach at your venue.
 Peening workshops by arrangement.
 June 9th, Beginners Course at the West Country Scythe
 Fair
 July 7th, Knighthayes Court, National Trust, free
 workshops for National Meadows Day.
 August 3rd, Scything for Beginners at RHS Rosemoor,
 Devon
 Please go to www.somersetscytheschool.com for more
 details and how to apply.

Kevin Austin*

Skyegrove, Herodsfoot, Cornwall/SW Devon.
 07943653825
www.skyegrove.co.uk kevin@skyegrove.co.uk
 Learn to scythe with a relaxed efficient style with an
 Austrian
 scythe, we can come and deliver to groups (6max) on your
 own
 land or attend courses below.
 Scythers meet up & peening day 14th April 2018
 Beginners scything course: 19th May and 28th July 2018 –
 £65 (inc lunch)
 Improvers scything course: 1st September – £65 (inc
 lunch) Please go to www.skyegrove.co.uk for more detail.

London

Clive Leeke*
 Reading: Clive@AustrianScythes.co.uk
 Completed Scythe Teachers' Course in 2011 & 2012
 Courses in London and across the UK, suitable for all
 ages.
 Visit <http://www.austrianscythes.co.uk> for more info.
 'Learn to Mow with an Austrian Scythe'; venue: West
 Common, Lincoln; on: Saturday, 7th July 2018; FREE
 (booking essential - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-haystacks-scything-workshop-tickets-45811859505>)
 'Learn to Mow with an Austrian Scythe'; venue:
 Streatham Common, West London Saturday, 8th
 September 2018, 10am – 4pm; FREE (booking essential –
 call Mered on 07767 808673)

South East England

Nicole Clough*

Oxfordshire. good_clean_mud@icloud.com
 I provide training in the use, maintenance and joy of the
 Austrian scythe. I run one day courses within
 Oxfordshire and the surrounding counties and also offer
 tailor made sessions.
 Sun 13th May 2018 – Cogges Manor Farm, Witney,
 Oxfordshire www.cogges.org.uk
 Sat 18th Aug 2018 – Ragmans Farm, Lydbrook,
 Gloucestershire www.ragmans.co.uk/home/
 Sun 9th Sep 2018 – Cogges Manor Farm, Witney,
 Oxfordshire www.cogges.org.uk/
 Places on the above courses are £60 per person, with an
 additional cost of £20 if equipment hire is required. To
 discuss your requirements or make a booking, please get
 in touch.

Mark Allery*

Haslemere mark@woodlandantics.com <https://woodlandantics.wordpress.com/scythes/>
 I use scythes regularly for traditional orchard, meadow,
 heathland and woodland management and run bespoke
 courses for conservation groups and volunteer organisations.
 I teach and sell Austrian Scythes but specialise in the use,
 remaking and history of the traditional English Scythe
 including steam bending the snathes.
 Learn to mow with a scythe 1st July, 12th August at Weald
 & Downland Museum (please book with the museum)
 English Scythe Course 8th July at Weald & Downland
 Museum (please book with the museum)
 Learn to mow with a scythe Sat 3rd June & Thurs 7th
 September at Rosamund Meadow for Transition
 Guildford

East Anglia

Richard Brown*

Kings Lynn, Norfolk. richardjbrown556@gmail.com
 Botanist, ecologist and seedsman offers scythe courses
 and tuition by arrangement.
 Can tailor courses for individuals or groups to include
 practical scythe instruction plus wildflower meadow and
 grassland management.
 Visit Emorsgate Seeds
<https://wildseed.co.uk/articles/2017/02/01/scythe-training-events-and-courses-2017> website for more
 details or email as above.
 Practical scything & grassland management. Wed 27th
 June 2018.
 This event will take place on the sown wild flower
 meadows around Emorsgate's seed farm.
 Price: £60 Book here:- <https://wildseed.co.uk/products/view/8>

Scotland

Steve Tomlin*

Cumbria, England stevetomlin8@gmail.com
SteveTomlinCrafts.wordpress.com
 Steve has taught several courses in Scotland, as far north
 as Caithness. Email to book a group workshop at your
 own venue and Steve will travel to you which is much
 more economical. Read about my scythe course near
 Ellen, Aberdeenshire.

Rob Brodie

Fife, robmaculture@yahoo.co.uk,
 Beginners scything workshops suitable for anyone
 interested in using a scythe to manage green spaces.
 Please email to arrange a workshop and for more
 information. Also visit <http://quietertimes.org> for a few
 more details.

Ireland**Chris Hayes***

Wexford, Ireland, chris@badgershillforestry.ie
 Learn to use a scythe in the wonderful environment of
 the Irish National Heritage Park in Ferrycarrig,
 Wexford. See <http://www.irishheritage.ie/> for details
 about booking, payment and all our wonderful courses!
 Learn to Mow with an Austrian Scythe May 5th May
 26th, June 16th and June 30th. 75 Euro per class
 Scythes available to buy year round and private tuition
 available at The Irish National Heritage Park
www.irishheritage.ie

Channel Islands**Fiona Pollock**

Guernsey and Channel Islands
fionapollockuk@yahoo.co.uk or 07781 435 395
 Based in Guernsey but willing to island hop upon
 discussion. Individual and group lessons available for
 beginners or improvers. The scythe is a diverse tool that
 can be used in a variety of situations. You will learn the
 foundational skills necessary to get going confidently
 with the scythe. I stock and sell scythe kits.

National

If you have a group of friends and your own grass, the
 following teachers can be booked to come and teach at
 your own location.

Steve Tomlin*

Cumbria stevetomlin8@gmail.com
stevetomlin8.wordpress.com/learn-to-scythe
 Courses across the UK for beginners and improvers, run

by an internationally respected mower and tutor. I have
 been teaching since 2010 and am the author of the Learn
 to Scythe book, the first practical instruction manual for
 the Austrian scythe.

Chris Riley*

chris@pratensis.net 07719 691312
 Experienced scythesman and trainer. I mainly deliver
 beginners' courses in the Wessex area, but sometimes it
 can be feasible to go further afield. Austrian scythes
 available for purchase. See web site for more information
www.pratensis.net

Fiona Pollock *

Guernsey and Channel Islands
fionapollockuk@yahoo.co.uk or 07781 435 395
 Based in Guernsey but willing to island hop upon
 discussion. Individual and group lessons available for
 beginners or improvers. The scythe is a diverse tool that
 can be used in a variety of situations. You will learn the
 foundational skills necessary to get going confidently
 with the scythe. I stock and sell scythe kits.

Jez Hastings* Peak District jeremyhastings@me.com
 Way of the Scythe Courses www.jeremyhastings.uk

Andrea Gilpin* Powys, hello@wildmeadow.co.uk,
www.wildmeadow.co.uk

Courses across England and Wales for beginners and
 improvers. I have enjoyed teaching since 2010 and clients
 include Wildlife Trusts, National Trust, RSPB and many
 community groups.

Clive Leeke*

Reading: Clive@AustrianScythes.co.uk
 Completed Scythe Teachers' Course in 2011 & 2012
 Courses in London and across the UK, suitable for all
 ages.
 Visit <http://www.austrianscythes.co.uk> for more info.

EQUIPMENT

Jigs

New and better jigs are now available from all good scythe agents.
 The quality of the red painted ones we were getting from Slovakia
 kept deteriorating, and by the end they were being remachined by
 David Kuegler in Hereford, adding significantly to their price.
 The new jigs are from the Czech Republic and are visibly of better
 quality. Richard Brown gave one a test run on 1 April,
 international peening day. His verdict was:

This jig is a vast improvement in quality and finish on those from
 our previous supplier. The fit of the caps on the guide post is so
 perfect the cap descends gracefully down cushioned by the
 escaping air.

Sadly as a result I spent quite a bit of time just playing with it; it reminded me a bit of the pleasure associated
 with [pointless] air damped cup holders in some cars, and posh kitchen unit drawers.

**Falci Blades.**

Scythe Cymru is now selling Falci blades made in Italy. Information on the available blades can be found at
www.scythecymru.co.uk/falci-scythe-blades/

We also have a number of single blades of various other Falci models that we imported to try out. Phil will
 bring these along to the West Country Scythe Festival if people are interested in seeing/trying them.

Rubbish Meadows

By

Simon Fairlie

“What can I do with my grass?” The question has been asked by many who have taken on the management of a field in the hope of turning it into a “wildflower meadow”.

If the meadow is in good nick, and they mow early enough, then with luck it can be baled and sold for fodder. But a lot of meadows are not mown early enough, and in many cases fields may be under Higher Level Stewardship or some other regime where mowing is forbidden before a certain date, typically 15th July, sometimes as late as 1st August. If mowing occurs after these dates and the field is rank, or stocked with coarse and quick growing grasses such as ryegrass, cocksfoot or Yorkshire fog, then it will likely produce poor quality hay that livestock disdain.

Hay that has gone to seed is about as appetizing for most animals as spinach that has bolted or stringy runner beans are for humans.

In such cases there are a number of ways of disposing of the vegetation:

- You can use it for mulch around fruit trees if it happens to be an orchard.
- You can wilt it a bit and then compost it; but hay doesn't compost that well on its own. A proportion of manure will help, but people who don't have a purpose for their hay don't usually have livestock.
- You can dry it sufficiently to burn it in a bonfire.
- You can make hay, bale it and use it to heat your house in a specially designed burner.

If you don't happen to have an orchard or a hay-bale heating system the remaining two options are rather a lot of work for not very much return.

* * *

There is one other course of action that I find myself carrying out, more by accident than by design.

Although I make most of the hay necessary to feed my dairy cows, I usually have to buy some in to get me through the winter. If I am not very careful, what I buy can turn out to be poor quality hay that the cows pick at unenthusiastically, leaving a substantial amount in the manger. This is because a lot of the hay is made late under Stewardship or similar regimes, and

perhaps also because most people nowadays don't know how to make hay in difficult weather.

This is not a serious problem because I can use the reject hay as bedding for the cows. It is not quite as easy to handle as straw, but it is perfectly acceptable — and once rotted it provides a more nitrogen-rich compost for our vegetable garden than will straw. It is also, believe it or not, cheaper. Straw has become increasingly difficult to locate in the more pastoral parts of the country, and where I live is almost impossible to find towards the end of winter. This is partly due to the fact that modern varieties of barley and wheat are now so dwarf there is not much straw to harvest.

* * *

My use of reject hay as bedding has led me to fancy whether the time isn't right for a revival of litter meadows in Britain. A litter meadow is one that is mown specifically for animal bedding: the word litter



is derived from the French for bedding, *litière*, the original meaning still being retained in the term “cat litter”. But “litter meadow” also conveniently retains the modern meaning of the word “litter”, since all it produces is rubbish hay.

George Peterken has some interesting observations about litter meadows in his book *Meadows*. Although there have been examples in Britain, they are more consciously recognized on the European continent,



for example in Switzerland where regulations ordain that they should not be mown until after 1 September. They tend to be on the wetter land where growth starts late. Peterken also notes that they are often a comparatively modern adaption, dating back to the enclosures of the 18th and 19th century, when areas that are now pastoral started to specialize in dairy and beef. Prior to that the better land would have been producing corn, and hence straw for bedding, whilst the poor and wet land would have been common grazing. Could litter meadows emerge as a post-modern adaption to changing agricultural conditions — namely diminishing yields of straw from arable crops, and the financial inducements to maintain biodiverse meadows as “public goods” advocated by Michael Gove?

It would be nice to think so. It is a potentially win/win combination, in which livestock benefit from ample bedding, while the otherwise worthless vegetation composts more readily thanks to their dung. It would give some economic purpose to the maintenance of these meadows. It might also help to improve their management. Scrupulous landowners would not want to be buying in bedding hay that introduced noxious weed seeds, so more expensive bedding hay might be sold with an ecological survey relating to its provenance. The hay would also be free of chemical inputs, unlike most straw.

* * *

But of course its not going to happen, not on any scale or any time soon. Why not? Because bedding animals on straw or hay only makes ecologic and economic sense when it is one element of an organic agricultural cycle that converts fertility-building vegetation (the good hay) first into animal feed, then into dung which is composted with the bedding material and applied to arable crops. This, unfortunately, is not how most of our farmers operate. Currently, arable crops are grown with artificial fertilizers on stockless farms where straw serves no purpose, so they eliminate it.

Elsewhere, dairy cattle are bedded on plastic mats or on sand, with the resulting slurry pumped out to the over-fertile silage land that feeds them, leaching excess nitrogen and phosphates into watercourses. Meanwhile effete and purposeless horses are bedded on dust-extracted hemp hurds, or wood chippings, which, along with heavy doses of Ivermectin wormer, make the resulting manure hopelessly unsuitable for organic cultivation.

One day this dysfunctional agricultural system will collapse or fade away — when we put an end to the distorting influence of fossil fuels and the superabundance of artificial fertilizers. Until that happens litter meadows, and indeed biodiverse meadows of all kinds, are likely to remain in an economic limbo.

Field names and the tithe maps of Wales

by
Michelle Laine

Field names and the tithe maps of Wales
Field names are much more attractive (and memorable!) than the identifying numbers provided by the Welsh Government. One of the benefits of having learnt Welsh is a better understanding of the meaning of these names, as well as a better chance of pronouncing them correctly.

Names that describe the position of the fields in a farm are common eg Cae Gwaelod (bottom field), Cae Uchaf (Upper Field). Others allude to a special quality of the field - Cae Cnwc (hillock field), Waun o flaen ty (Wet field in front of the house).

Field names are not static. On the tithe map from c1840 one of our hay fields is called Parc Gwair (hay field). It is now called Cae Mari Jones, after a resident of the now ruined cottage in the corner of the field.

We have recently taken on the management of two more fields. One is called Cae Herc (lopsided field), referring to its odd shape. The other is called Cae Gwaelod (bottom field), which really doesn't fit with its position in relation to the rest of our land.

Whilst searching for other original names for the field I came across the work of Cynefin (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84IalazkhOU&index=2&list=PLQV3qCBDsvjmLPygs-wQ-QLY3gWwxTiHq>). Between 2013 and 2017, this project surface-cleaned, repaired and digitized 1,224 tithe maps held in the National Library. The result is a digitized continuous map of Wales for the period around 1840. The map can be found here <https://places.library.wales/home>.



Haymaking on Cae Top

Be prepared to lose hours studying this fascinating map, especially if you have a holding in Wales. When clicked on, markers on the map give information about a field's number, name, occupier and land owner in c1840. From here there are links to the original tithe map and its entry in the register.

Markers can be overlaid on a modern satellite map, NLS map from 1888 – 1913 or the c1840 tithe maps.



Standing hay on Parc Gwair (Cae Mari Jones)

Switching between the maps clearly shows changes in field boundaries, footpaths and tracks over time.

The results can be filtered by occupier, showing which parcels of land were managed as a unit. They can also be filtered by owner. Large tracts of land around us belonged to the Cawdor Estate, including most of the fields we now manage. There was an auction of farms belonging to Estate of Cawdor, including those in our parish, in Carmarthen, Wednesday 19th September 1923. <https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/519925>

The full 1888 – 1913 maps can be found on the National Library of Scotland website here - <https://maps.nls.uk/os/6inch-england-and-wales/>, as well as other historical maps covering the whole of the UK.

In 1840 Cae Gwaelod was Cae Cannol (middle field), not much of an improvement for our purposes! No doubt some new descriptive name will arise with time and use.

The Peculiar Case of the Russian Jig

by
Colin Close

Having spent a large part of my life designing and creating mechanical items I have been fascinated by the various means that have been contrived to peen a scythe blade. I have always been particularly interested by this picture of a jig that appears on the Scythe Connected website.

This jig when studied is a bit like the Slovakian jigs but turned inside out. I thought perhaps it might have one advantage over the tube and post type jig in that

the edge of the blade is not dulled by being pushed against the post. It seems though that this jig is not available commercially although drawings do exist for something similar.

After some hunting around I came across a less elegant version as you can see from the picture in figure 2 below.

I am fortunate to have a Russian friend in Germany

whose father lives in Russia so I was able to obtain a couple of these. It was somewhat ironic that when I asked my friend she was surprised that I knew about scythes and it then transpired that it was something she

loved to do and was taught how by her grandfather. It took a while for the items to arrive and so while I waited I did a bit more research on other unusual jigs which the Russians natively call "skewers" at least that is how Google translates the Russian word. It seems there are a few variants on the jig that first excited my interest

The illustrations show some typical variations on the



Fig 3 looks like a homemade version of the line drawing in figure 1.

Fig 3

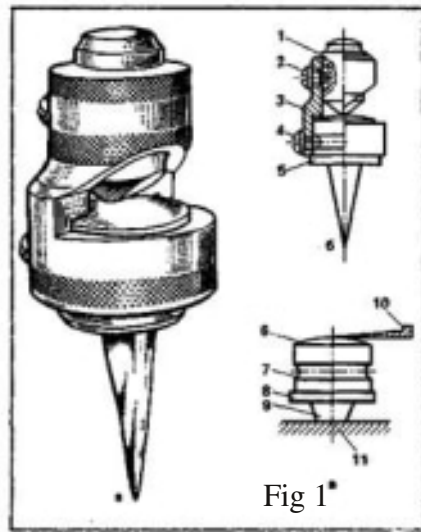


Fig 1



Fig 2

Figure 4 is the "piece de resistance" found on a Russian auction site and shows probably the most sophisticated incarnation.

Here is the translated description that appears alongside it.

"The Soviet USSR is a 'regulated grandmother, semi-automatic, very rare, in a single copy, in an ideal condition, almost new (seen by strikers, adjusting screws and the general condition, who do not believe-send cash on delivery). The metal on the strikers is impeccable, prolonged use, the best that was generally in the Soviet Union and after it."

This jig probably dates from around 1950. Note the adjusting screws to position the blade.

Fig 4



Fig 5 is an interesting variation on the Slovakian tube and post jig, the flat bar in the centre being the post. Presumably there is an additional part that fits over the top of the post so that the hammer can be used. I couldn't find any further detail on this type of jig but it's possible that it could have two different profiles to the top anvil one on either side of the flat bar.



Fig 5

Getting back to the jigs that I recieved from Russia the picture below is "as delivered".



It may not be immediately obvious from the picture but both anvils are actually flat! (Fig 7)



H'mm I thought maybe they know something I don't? Time for testing I got out a gash blade (one I'd bent) and tried to use the jig. I discovered that even when using my 4 pound smiths hammer I could make no impression on the edge of a Fux blade. Were Russian scythes made from softer steel? I thought it unlikely so

what was going on. Since I had two jigs I decided to modify the tup and anvil on one of them to closer to that of Fig 1. I could not go to the full extreme because it was likely that I would break through the hardened surface of the parts so decided to dome both tup and anvil to a domed shape as in Fig 8. Doing this made virtually no difference despite using a weighty hammer and striking very heavy blows. As can be seen from the picture of the anvil below (Fig 9) the area of contact was still too large.



Fig 8



Fig 9

What is also evident is that the lower anvil was not particularly hard and you can see where the edge of the blade lay when it was being worked..

Clearly these jigs were not of high quality but why was the design so clearly deficient when all the other jigs of similar type had shaped anvils?

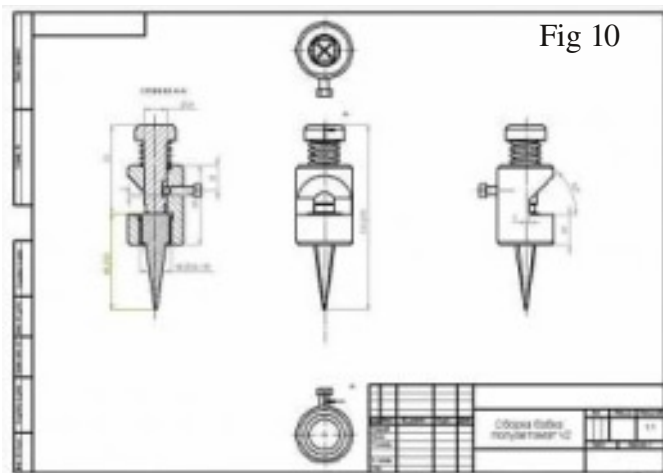


Fig 10

I suspect that these were manufactured by somebody who knew very little about scythes; why do I say this? Well my exploration of Russian scything sites turned up this CAD drawing shown on the left (fig 10). Note the shape of the tup and anvil; they are flat! Could it be that some enterprising individual has decided that there was some money to be made out of manufacturing these jigs who has found this drawing?

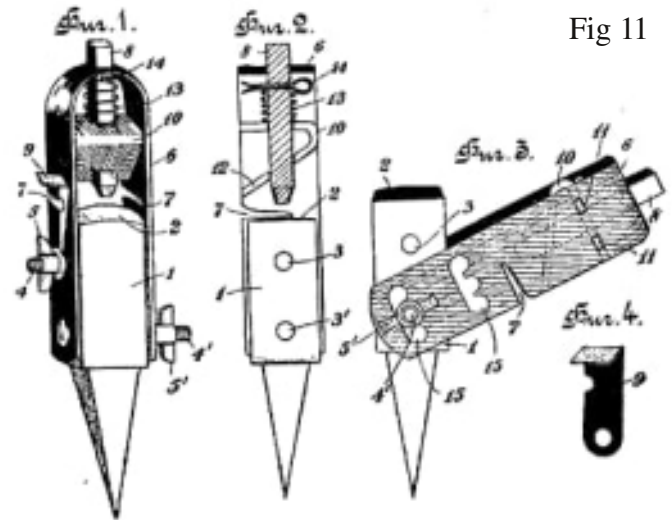


Fig 11

Whatever is/was going on they clearly did not see this Russian patent from 1926 (Probably around the height of scythe use in the USSR) which clearly illustrates the fundamental requirements of a peening jig (Fig 11). Unfortunately I didn't have time to type in the Cyrillic into Google translate to actually get a description of the patentable features of this particular Device. Perhaps I'll save that for a subsequent article.

Things did not stand still in Russia and in the early 1960's the Russian "Ministry of Agriculture" came up with the device shown opposite (Fig 12) in response to farmers who said it would be helpful if they could peen their scythes more efficiently. I hope to make this device the feature of another article in Windrow at a later date but present it here as probably the last "new" peening jig to be produced in Russia before the scythe started to be replaced by mechanical mowers.

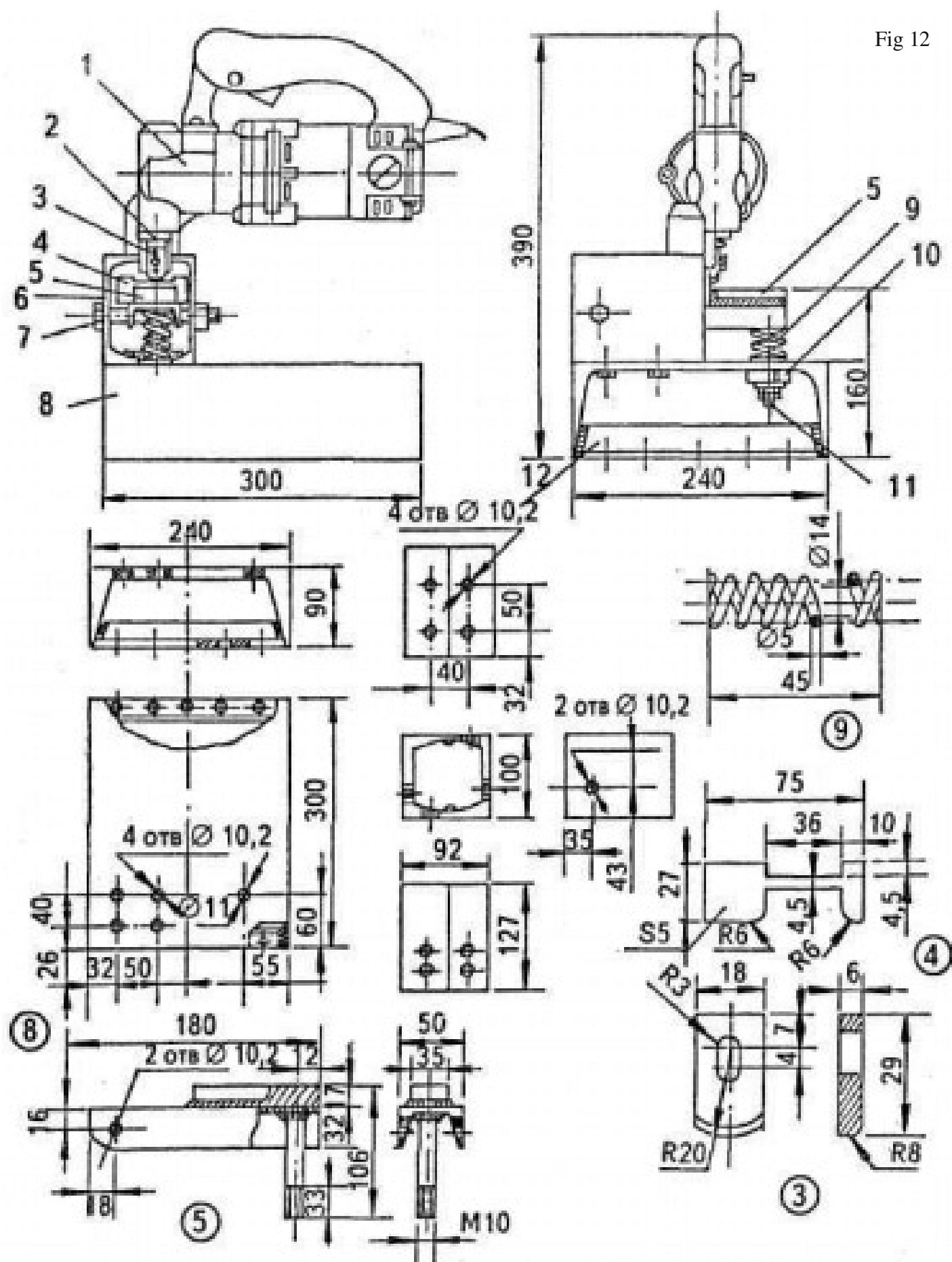
Finally for those days when you perhaps feel the need for a good chortle I leave you with this rather entertaining link from a Russian scything forum as translated by Google. It's entitled "How to repel a braid"

That's braid by the way not boarders!
<http://guns.allzip.org/topic/89/660965.html>

¹ "grandmother" ("babka") is used in Slavic languages to mean a peening anvil, so "regulated grandmother" means a peening jig.



Fig 12



1 — электропривод; 2 — вкладыши; 3 — блок; 4 — УПФ; 5 — наковальня; 6 — корпус; 7 — ось наковальни; 8 — станина; 9 — пружина; 10 — резиновая шайба; 11 — регулирующий болт; 12 — уголок

Eighth SABI Winter Meeting

MINUTES 27th JANUARY 2018

Present- Richard Brown (chair), Simon Fairlie, Gill Barron, Phil Batten, Chris Riley, Janice Bell, Kevin Austin, Charlotte Oliver, Beth Tilston (host), Jez Hastings, Jim McVittie, David Kuegler, Colin Close

1: Apologies for Absence:-

Olga Damant, Mark Allery, John Letts, Mary Ellis, Steve Tomlin, Simon Damant, Andi Rickard, Fiona Pollock

2: Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously accepted.

3: Committee Members and Executive

Richard Brown will continue as chair

Mark Allery will continue to be secretary

Chris Riley will continue as treasurer and membership secretary

4: Treasurers Report

The treasurer (Chris Riley with appropriate hat) advised that membership was up and that this had increased contributions by 8%

Expenditure this year was low leaving a surplus of £692.82

Total assets were £3046.80

It was noted that the Unity Trust Bank made an £18 bank charge this year.

Simon Fairlie pointed out that the Land magazine had not been charged for their account.

It was mentioned that perhaps Triodos Bank or the Post Office may be able to offer a better rate.

5: Membership Report

The Membership Secretary Chris Riley (with a different hat!) reported that membership was up by 8% in line with the increase of income.

There was discussion with regard to improving notifications of membership renewals and initially it was thought that reminders might be sent via the regional coordinators.

The collection of subscriptions would become easier once the NOCHEX account and button had been set up on the SABI website.

There was an in-depth discussion of the nature of SABI membership and renewals. Various options were discussed.

The current situation is that members pay an annual subscription of £10 renewable each June (to coincide with the scythe fair and AGM). Currently Members who fail to renew are retained on the membership list so by default we have; full [paid up] members, and 'associate members' (those with lapsed renewals).

Steve Tomlin (in correspondence fed to meeting) questioned whether a membership fee was needed at all. Kevin suggested replacing membership fees with a one off joining fee and free membership thereafter.

It was agreed that it is useful to maintain a full membership list (rather than sign off lapsed members). 'Associate' members can still contribute to the scythe community and the longer membership list could carry more weight in the political arena when needed.

The point was raised that if this model of membership was used SABI would have limited income. Simon Fairlie Suggested that we could have funding drives for specific projects when needed (eg crowd funding) to allow Kevins suggestion to implemented.

Simon Fairlie said he could also add a suggestion to purchase SABI membership at the bottom of his scythe purchase forms to encourage farms and other organisations to join.

Chris Riley [as membership administrator] said that he favoured simplicity and was in favour of the free membership with joining fee model.

Colin Close suggested that membership was undervalued since the SABI mailing list had provided him with paid work.

Beth Tilston: Suggested that an annual email which would include the NOCHEX button should be sent to members to encourage them to renew their subscriptions or to make a voluntary contribution.

Resolution

The decision of the meeting regarding the proposed change in the membership arrangements was that we retain the status quo (membership subscription £10) but that the annual fixed membership renewal contribution would be changed to a voluntary contribution.

Simon Fairlie again raised the point about putting "Do you wish to join SABI" membership applications on his scythe ordering forms and asked for confirmation that this was acceptable. Simon said he would undertake to forward these to the Treasure/Membership Secretary.

This proposal was accepted by the meeting

5: Windrow

Colin Close again accepted the task of laying out the next copy of Windrow with Simon Fairlie providing editorial material. CC also undertook to distribute via the mailing list.

It was suggested that two shorter issues of Windrow be published one in January and the other in April. This was agreed.

There was some discussion about expanding the content of the magazine. It was felt that younger people should be represented perhaps by interviews on why they enjoy scything.

Charlotte Oliver agreed to approach young people with a view to creating copy

It was also suggested that profiles of some of the older members of SABI would make good copy.

6: Google Groups and Facebook.

Facebook interactions were up by around the same amount as membership 8%. The total number of SABI facebook group members stands at 246. SABI membership is not a requirement to join this closed discussion group.

It was noted that the Facebook group had a leading question before joining was allowed this has helped reduce the number of spurious memberships.

Generally the Facebook site is working well.

The level of discussion on the SABI google (email) group was down.

Colin Close suggested that an Instagram site be set up for photographs no decision was reached on this matter.

7: Regional Coordinators

Beth Tilston said that her entry was now out of date having moved to Blakeney, FOD

Chris Riley and Richard Brown said they would review the regional coordinators.

It was noted that the website had no automated means of updating email addresses Richard Brown said he would investigate this.

Charlie Quinell had volunteered to create an international site Richard Brown was asked whether he was pursuing this. The answer was yes but the contact was not responding to emails, he said he would keep on trying. The assembly agreed that it would be good if this continued to be pursued. RB to set up international links page and pursue contacts.

8: Festivals

New festivals were noted at Settle and South Shropshire

Simon Fairlie suggested that a grain harvesting event has never been organised.

The potential for a festival at Totnes was discussed. Totness need help to cut small areas of grain typically 1 acre but it was thought that it would be difficult to base an event around this as it needs a party of scythers at uncertain times. The event would have to be "promotional" as the optimum harvesting time couldn't be observed necessitating the sacrifice of the cut grain.

9: Promotion:

Beth Tilston mentioned that Countryfile had been in contact with regard to scything at Blenheim Palace. Chris Riley said he would pick up this lead.

Simon Fairlie said that Gardeners Question Time had been in contact with him. Simon Fairlie asked whether we should ask Gardeners Question Time to hold their show at the Green Fair.

National Meadows Day was also mentioned as a possible vehicle for the promotion of scything again in 2018.

Kevin Austin suggested that we approach young farmers clubs. There was some debate about this, promotional material was suggested as a possible vehicle. Others suggested that special needs schools may provide fertile areas for development.

Jez said that he had already started exploring this at a school near to him with scything being added to the school curriculum.

Actions:

Kevin Austin to action Cornwall
 Colin Close to approach Plumpton College
 Simon Fairlie will write to Gardeners Question Time producers.
 Richard Brown to explore promotion at National Meadows Day
 Simon Fairlie re-raised the issue of a promotional video after some discussion this was considered a worthwhile project.
 A Welsh producer Hugh was known to some and he was thought to be a good candidate to create the content. Phil Batten said he would contact him and explore the possibilities.

10: Teaching

Some issues occurred with the master class at the last Green Scythe Fair where a number of groups all converged on the peening test at the same time.
 Action on this issue will be taken by a subcommittee

Gill Barron stated that the LNA were adding a lot of extra stress to the organisation of the Green Scythe Fair and suggested that they may be moved to another site.
 Jez Hastings asked that it be proposed to the Green Scythe Fair committee that an acre of grass be set aside separately from the Green Fair for the purposes of training. Any additional costs for this should be born by the Green Scythe Fair.

There was a break where scythe equipment was discussed for the purposes of continuity this is shown at the end of the teaching section.

David Keugler made a proposal that there be a skills sharing workshop for teachers to share their experience. This was discussed and it appears that local mentoring schemes seemed to be the best way forward.
 Richard Brown said he would contact David about this with a view to putting out a circular.

Website course listing

It was proposed that the asterisks next to scythe teachers listed in Windrow and on the website be removed and that the paragraph in the minutes be substituted for this.

“Many of the teachers listed here have attended the scythe teachers’ course at the Somerset Scythe Festival. This two day course is taught by Simon Fairlie, Christiane Laganda, Phil Batten and Steve Tomlin. It covers the methods and practicalities of teaching the use of the scythe, including a strong emphasis on safety.
 Richard Brown will liase with Steve Tomlin and indicate that this has been agreed.

Equipment

Simon Fairlie spoke briefly about scythe equipment and passed around a high quality peening jig from a new manufacturer. A bulk order has been placed for these jigs and they will replace the former type. SF also warned that there would be a price rise on equipment due to Brexit. This could be up to 10%.

11: A.O.B.

SABI involvement in Europe

Kevin Austin had attended a competition in Switzerland where competitive scything is serious stuff. It was suggested that we might use some of the accumulated funds to provide financial assistance to a young person either in training or travel so that they could attend such an event. It was decided to take this forward.

Chris Riley Stated that a new batch of leaflets were required but before production some changes were required. Chris Riley said he would attend to this.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Jez Hastings for Beth and Will for hosting the meeting in their new home.

Chris Riley said that he might be able to host the next winter gathering event at his new home in Gillingham.

The next meeting will be the AGM at the Green Scythe Fair on 10th June 2018

Meeting Closed

Detailed Programme
26th Haymaking Festival Ryghsetra, Norway
Continued

Demonstration of 2-wheeled cutting machine. 10.15 - 12.00 Pollarded trees: theoretical knowledge and practical use of the knife and saw. Continuing work in the meadow.

12.15 – 13.00 Lunch at Ryghsetra.

13.00 - 16.00 Open day for the public (in Norwegian: 'Slåttegilde') in the meadow at Ryghsetra. Different activities.

19.00 - Big fiesta / dinner for the haymakers and co-workers. Social intercourse and cultural events. If the weather permits, we continue into the early hours of the night in the meadow!

Sunday

08.00 - 09.00 Breakfast

09.00 - 13.00 Finishing the work in the meadow.

Discussions.

13.00 - 14.00 Dinner.

14.00 - 15.00 Cleaning & washing of all rooms, common area etc.

15.00 - 16.00 Termination of the course. Evaluation with feedback and farewells from participants.

16.00 Finish