

Gwent Wildlife Trust Wildlife Winners Update for 2013



Loss of Hedgerow Habitats

The widespread loss of the UK's hedgerows is due to many causes – agricultural intensification, housing development and road building as well as neglect and abandonment. Between 1984 and 1990 over 121 000 Km of hedgerows were lost from the UK.

Here at GWT, we promote sustainable hedgerow management through training courses on hedge laying, using staff and volunteers to do management work on hedges as well as using local contractors on longer lengths of hedgerows



Pentwyn Farm, Annette Murray

Hedgerows on GWT Reserves

Most of our reserves contain hedgerows but some of the best are at New Grove Meadows, Kitty's Orchard, Pentwyn Farm and Wyewood Common.

On these sites can be found a mixture of old grown out hedgerows, newly laid hedges, mature hedges ready for laying and newly planted hedgerows on old field boundaries.

Why are Hedgerows Important?

They are one of the most distinctive features of our landscape, snaking across hills and valleys framing medieval field systems (Pentwyn Farm), which provide corridors of ecological connectivity across the countryside. They provide food and shelter for wildlife, farm livestock and us. (Sloe gin anyone?)

Hedgerows help reduce soil loss and pollution, regulate water flow and absorb carbon dioxide as they grow. They provide nesting habitat for many small bird species as well as the nationally scarce dormouse which has a wide spread population in Gwent due its superb hedgerow network and connectivity with small woodland areas.



Kitty's Orchard, Tim Green



Rogiet Poorland, Tim Green

Gwent Wildlife Trust Wildlife Winners Update for 2013



Reserves where your Money has been spent?

The 2013 Wildlife Winners raffle generated £1106.00

The money has been used to carry out work at:

- Kitty's Orchard – hedge laying, new hedge planting (40metres) and new livestock fencing.
- Rogiet Poorland – hedgelaying and new planting in gaps together with new livestock fencing.
- Pentwyn Farm – hedgelaying training course, hedgelaying and new planting in Pentwyn Orchard together with new livestock fencing.
- New Grove Meadows – hedgelaying and new livestock fencing
- Ty Mawr Convent – new livestock fencing and field gates to protect old hedges from livestock grazing.

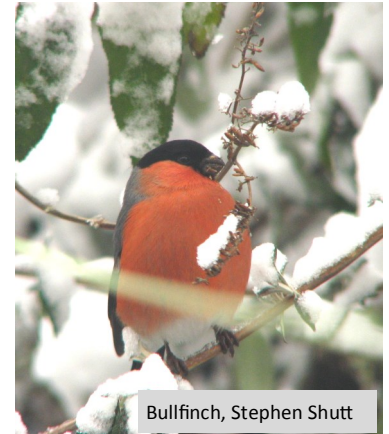


Pentwyn Farm, Tim Green

Hedgerow Management Techniques

Hedges were established to keep grazing livestock in a pasture field and out of arable crops. Traditionally a hedge was laid where the stems (peachers) are almost cut through then bent over (laid) to an angle of 45 degrees (this varies across the UK) and woven around stakes driven into the hedge line. A top banding of hazel rods (heatherings) are used in some styles of hedgelaying to keep the peachers tight and firm.

These hedges were cut by long handled hooks on a regular basis by the farm workers during the winter. After about 10- 15 years the hedge was allowed to grow up ready for laying again.



Bullfinch, Stephen Shutt

If a hedge is left unmanaged, it will turn into a line of trees which is gappy and does not provide ground cover for small mammals. An example of this can be seen at Springdale Farm where a line of oak trees and the occasional hawthorn remain.



Pentwyn Farm, Tim Green

To restore this type of feature where the trunks of the hedgerow are too large to cut and lay then the only method is to coppice the hedgerow and plant new hedgerow whips in any gaps. The regrowth of this hedge can then be laid in 5 – 10 years time.

An example of this can be seen around one of the hay meadows at Pentwyn Farm.