



RUNNING FOX WALKS

7 FLAILING AND BALING



Burwash Bales...

Hawthorn berries



The hedge to your right (west) and the east-west hedge before it are extremely old, starting to die and in urgent need of remedial work. These hedges will be 'coppiced' and 'beaten up' during 2010, assisted by funding provided by our Environmental Stewardship agreement with Natural England.

Coppicing

All species have a natural life span and in the case of shrubby hedgerow species this is 50-60 years. Coppicing, like hedge laying, is an ancient system of management which effectively enables this lifespan to be extended indefinitely. In some very old managed woods there are coppice 'stools' (the cut stumps from which new re-growth appears) of Hazel which are known to be over 1,000 years old (and thought to be as much as 10,000 years old) - far longer than any Hazel plant could live, unaided.

The Burwash combine in action!



Coppicing can be applied to most native deciduous trees and shrubs and requires the plant to be cut as close to the ground as possible. This has the paradoxical effect of completely rejuvenating the plant - in effect giving rise to a natural clone of the mother plant.

As with hedge laying, trees and saplings are retained and the opportunity is taken to 'beat up' the hedge - hence most of our hedgerows now contain a much wider range of species than the original enclosure hedges (which were almost entirely composed of Hawthorn). We coppice/lay our hedges on an approximately 30 year rotation. In the intervening years we keep them healthy by flail trimming.

Flail trimming

One year in three, during the late winter (after the berries have been stripped), we flail our hedges. This keeps the hedge to a suitable size and encourages 'tillering' (many new young shoots at the cut) which thickens the hedge.

Hawthorn only flowers (and thus fruits) on 'old' (over a year) wood so will produce berries 2 years out of 3. Each side of the hedge is flailed on a different 3-year rotation, so every hedge should fruit on one side or the other every year.

Our hedges provide a home and food for a huge number of insects, birds and mammals. In most cases they mark field and village boundaries that are thousands of years old, and they form the single most characteristic landscape feature of the English countryside.

Straw Bales

The straw bales in front of you, to the left, will be used for bedding for our Beef Shorthorn Suckler cow herd and our Essex Saddleback pig herd during the winter.

During Harvest, the combine cuts the standing wheat (or barley or oats) and then separates the grain from the straw and chaff by threshing and sieving. The grain is held in a tank, on the combine, to be unloaded into a trailer. The straw on the other hand, is discharged from the rear of the combine in a long swathe (row). This straw is subsequently picked up by round baler which rolls it up into a large, tight, round package all tied up with string (or net).

Environmental management at Burwash Manor Farm is assisted by Natural England's Environmental Stewardship scheme, which supports and rewards farmers in return for looking after England's countryside.

Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings.



Look at the ears on that!