

Water reed



The first full course is laid as far as the window, where it completes the dressed cheek and also starts the eaves formation.

Neat appearance and strength combine to enhance the ultimate finish around a window.

A pointed hazel sway, which had been inserted into the last course, is now used to secure the eaves-bunches beside the window-frame, into which the hooks are driven.



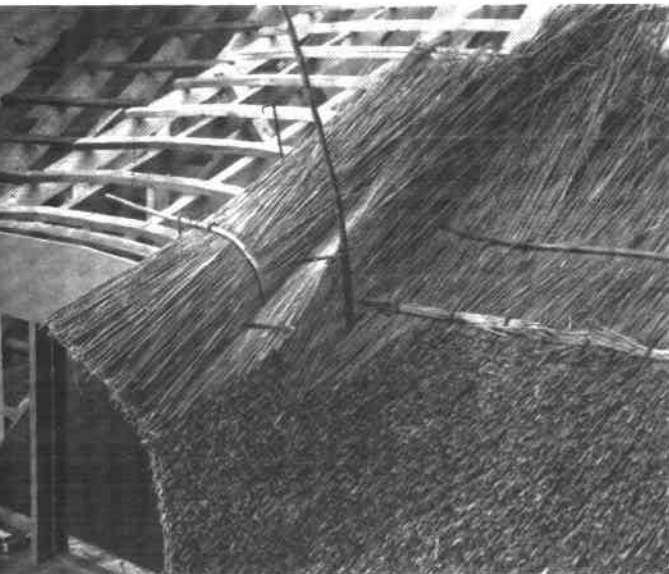


Laying the brow-course to the window calls for extra care if a good eaves-line is to result. Selected bunches are merged together with the left hand to avoid gaps and spaces appearing after dressing.

This small section of the brow-course has been dressed into position with the leggett, and the eaves-line has thus been determined.

To fasten the brow-course another pointed hazel sway is inserted, and being pliable, will easily bend down to the required shape of the window.





Special care is needed when the eaves-bunch is laid on the angle of the window.

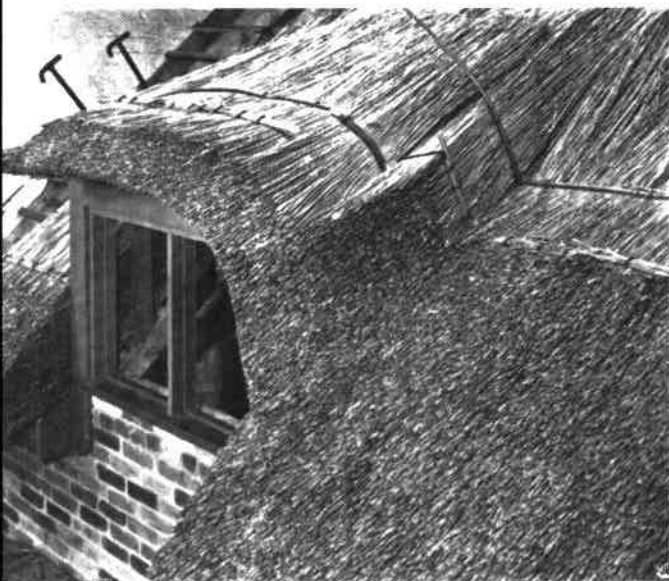
Attention must be paid to thickness as it is very easy to run off thin at this point, losing the symmetrical appearance of the whole window.

The hazel sway has been bent down and secured with a hook, driven into the first rafter of the window construction.

The brow-course is shown turning the angle of the window after further eaves-bunches have been laid.

If it is preferred, these eaves-bunches may now be tied in, if a firmly nailed batten has been provided for this purpose approximately 3" (100 mm) from the inside of the fascia. The fascia should have been raised above the batten face to provide the necessary tilt.

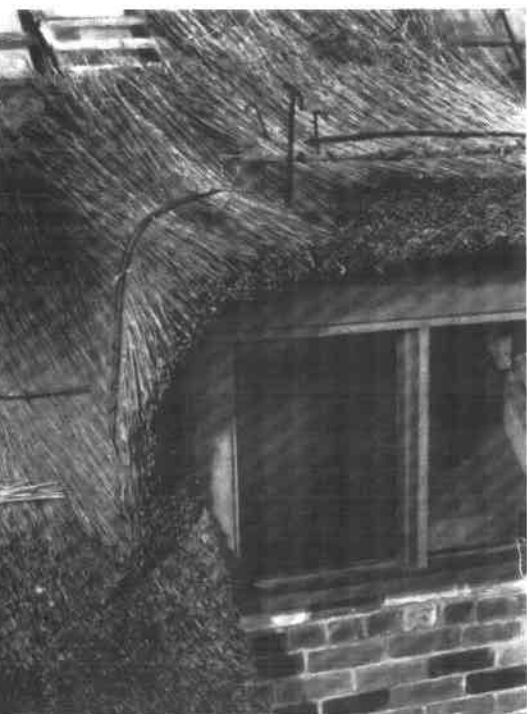




Now that the brow-course has been swayed down, the first full course over the window is started. It is important that this course and its accompanying hazel sway now become a continuation of those of the main roof.

Before any further progress is made on the window, the eaves and main courses must be set in on the opposite side.

The cheek is set and the eaves are started as previously shown, the only difference being that work proceeds in the opposite direction: from left to right.



Fixing the caves-bunches is now completed and the hazel sway is secured in readiness for the next course.

Still working from left to right, the brow-course is joined up and the eaves-line is now apparent.

A full course is now continued from the main roof and carried half-way over the window, whilst correspondingly the same course is started on the left and works towards the centre.





The first full course over the window is completed and is ready for the sway to be fixed. A close inspection is worth while in order to see how the join is made.

A selected hazel sway is pointed at the large end, and inserted into the reed above the sway on the main course, where it is hooked down to each rafter in turn, being positioned equi-distant from the top edge of the course.

From now on the work becomes more straightforward as each course carried along the main roof, sweeps over the window without making any break, until eventually the convex shape caused by the window gradually fades into a level surface before the ridge is reached.



The open-bonnet treatment of the eaves enables the maximum amount of light to enter the room, and affords excellent protection against extreme weather conditions.

Another type of window is actually built in the roof. In its construction due regard must be paid to the thickness of the thatch. The eaves-bunches are tied in as usual across the front of the window.

The brow-course is also continued through and swayed down.





It is essential that the dressed surface of reed is carried as high as possible in front of the window, not merely to maintain the thickness, but to reduce the area to be filled in at a later stage. In the case of a new window the tops of the reed may be allowed to penetrate inside the structure. They are subsequently cut off in one operation from the inside. Where this is not possible, shorter reed, with the tops cut off to the required length before laying, is used. Alternatively the tops may be allowed to slide up in front of the window, and are then removed by cutting just below the window-sill, after the sway is fixed.

The next full course is finished beside the window although it will be started again on the other side. This will leave a gap in front of the window which will be the subject of rather special treatment at a later stage.

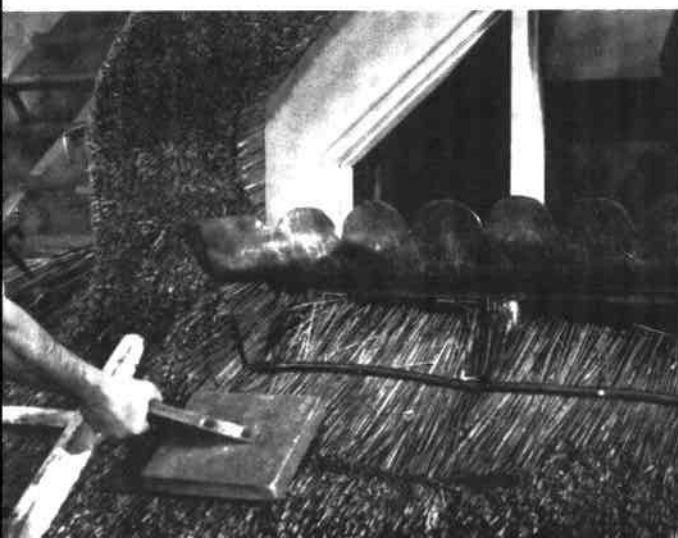
As previously described for another type of window, eaves-bunches are laid in position and fixed firmly down with a hazel sway.



These eaves-bunches are carried to the centre of the window, and at this stage the eaves are neatly dressed into line to conform with the required shape. It will be noted too that the sway is cut off and the 'tying in' method used. This is really a matter of preference, but it is suggested that with each bunch secured to the batten, there is less likelihood of any movement or slipping taking place at this point, where the reed is subject to greater wind pressure.

Having picked up the main course on the other side of the window, it is now possible to set the eaves-bunches and fix the sway.

Working from left to right towards the centre, the eaves-bunches are tied in and dressed into position. The line is determined by the arc formed by the top edge of the window-board.



The brow-course may now be laid, working from the right. This course is also carried over the window as far as the centre.

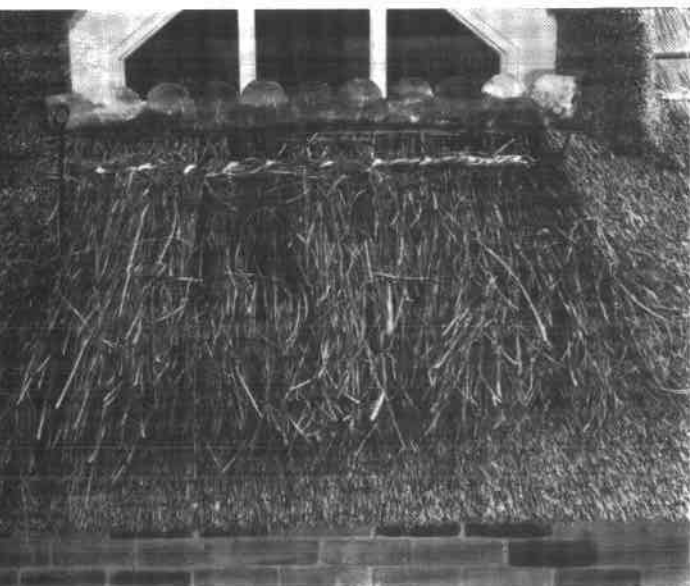
Again working from left to right, the brow-course is laid towards the centre, where it eventually joins up with that part which was carried over from the other side. This course determines the eaves-line and the final shape of the window. It is essential therefore upon completion to ensure, by sighting with the eye from every direction, that a satisfactory and symmetrical shape has been achieved. Each succeeding course may now be carried over the window in the normal way without any break.

To complete this type of window a sedge apron is required. Though out of sequence, details of the method of application are given at this stage.

Before laying the sedge however there are two essential operations to be carried out:

(a) The lead apron which has previously been fixed underneath the ploughed window-sill should now be lifted up out of the way.

(b) The shoulder, or extra thickness of reed left at the top of each course, should now be dressed off with the leggett in order to permit the layer of sedge to bed down tightly to the reed surface.

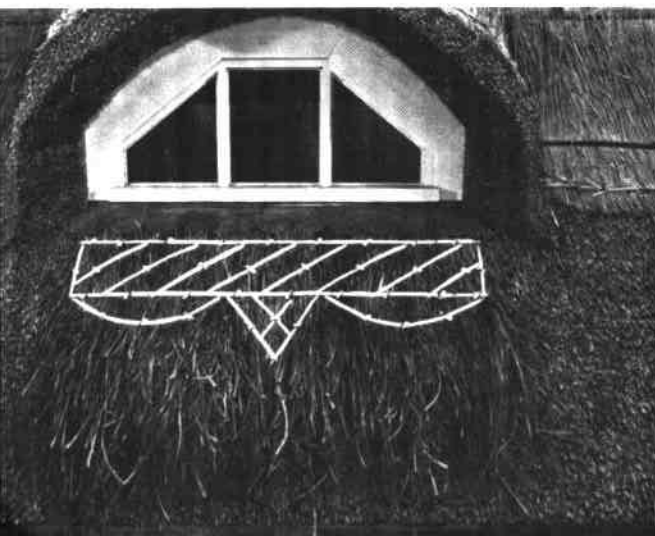


The sedge apron is laid by taking a good double handful of sedge, and after turning down the long ends at the top to make a tight bunch, it is worked firmly under the sill. The needle is inserted beside each bunch as it is laid and is used to force each section tightly together. The whole of this layer is fastened down with a 'scud' or 'bond' which consists of several pieces of sedge twisted together rope fashion, and sparred down into the course of reed underneath.

This first layer of sedge is completed to the full width of the window-frame.

The second and final layer of sedge is applied by working the bunch tightly underneath the sill, using the needle to force each portion back to the preceding bunch. The importance of this cannot be overstressed if a tight and solid finish is to be obtained.

Preparation of sedge is described on page 125.



The final layer of sedge is now carried through, enabling the finishing process to begin.

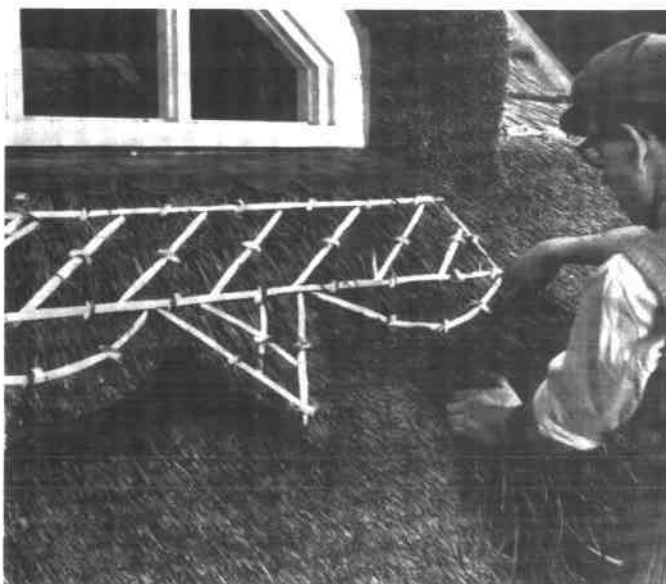
First the lead apron requires dressing into position, making a weatherproof junction with the sedge. The top ligger is then fixed just below the lead. The spars are driven into the solid reed underneath.

A variety of designs can be used, but a plain straight-cut finish may be preferred.

The illustration shows two liggers set 10" (250 mm) apart, filled in with cross-rods, forming a half herring-bone pattern. A little careful measurement will ensure that the liggers forming the design are correctly spaced.

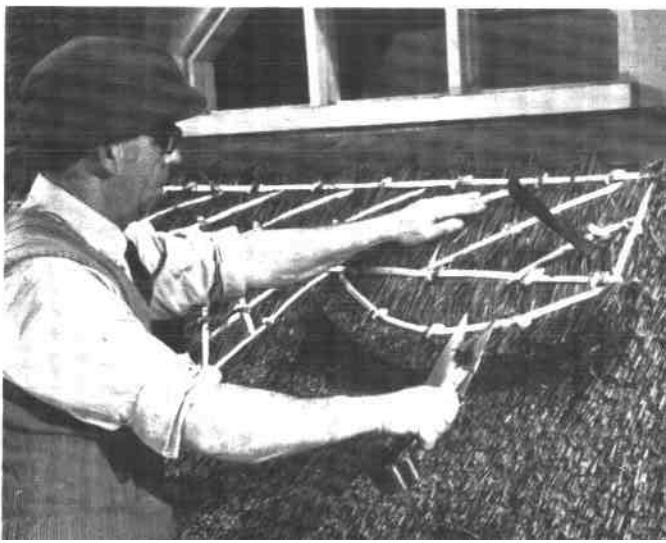


The effect of these liggers is not merely to act as a guide when the cutting is done, but also to tighten the sedge to such an extent that a short knife will cut through it both cleanly and easily.



The design shown is not only a popular one but very pleasing to the eye. It will be noted that the point is extended below the scallop to give balance to the pattern.

Trimming the surface with a pair of shears removes superfluous stalks and also provides a clean line, thus giving sharper definition to the finished pattern. In the case of all such aprons, care should be taken to keep the distance from the lead to the cutting-line down to a minimum, not merely for the sake of neatness, but also to reduce future maintenance.





A gable dormer is the type of abutment which has a ridge to it, and makes its junction with the main roof at a point below the ridge-line. It follows therefore that very careful treatment is required at the junction to make a sound finish.

A short roll or dolly is secured to the topmost batten on either side. The method by which this roll is made is explained on page 173, and is useful for a number of reasons: (a) it provides extra tilt for the last course of reed, (b) it provides a solid base into which spars may be driven when the ridge is fixed and (c) it prevents the topmost gable-bunches from sloping inwards.

Bunches are laid in the right-hand gable and fixed with a sway. Superfluous tops which oversail the ridge are cut off in line with the roll.

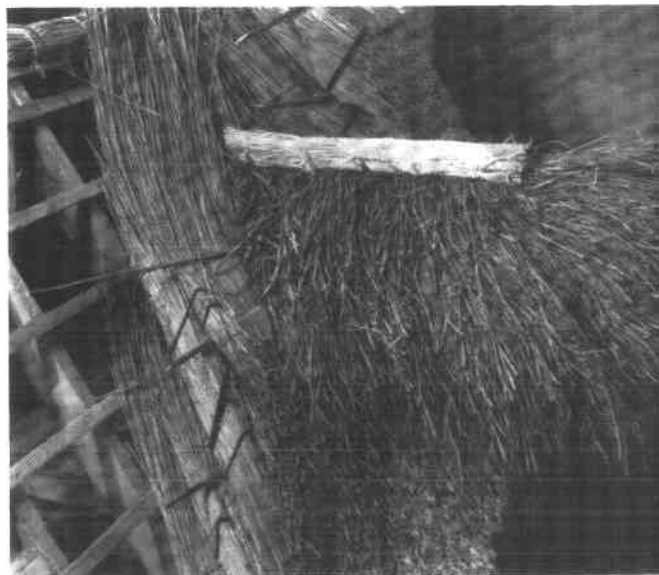
Left-hand gable-bunches are laid and fixed, the sway on both sides being carried over the apex to give additional strength at this point.



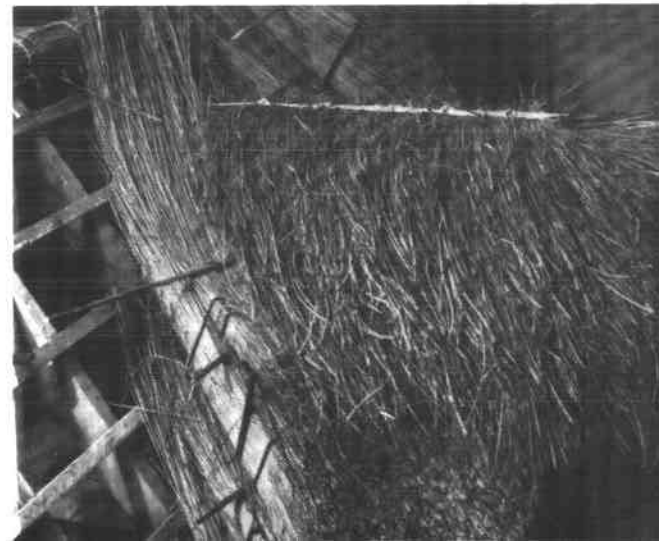


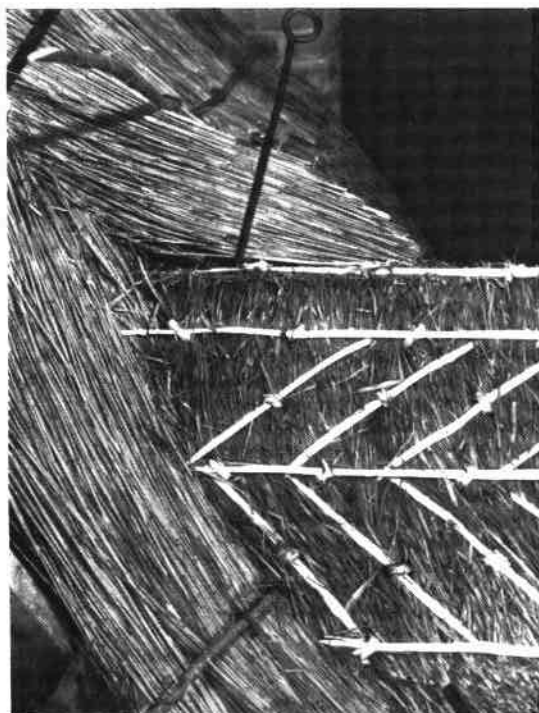
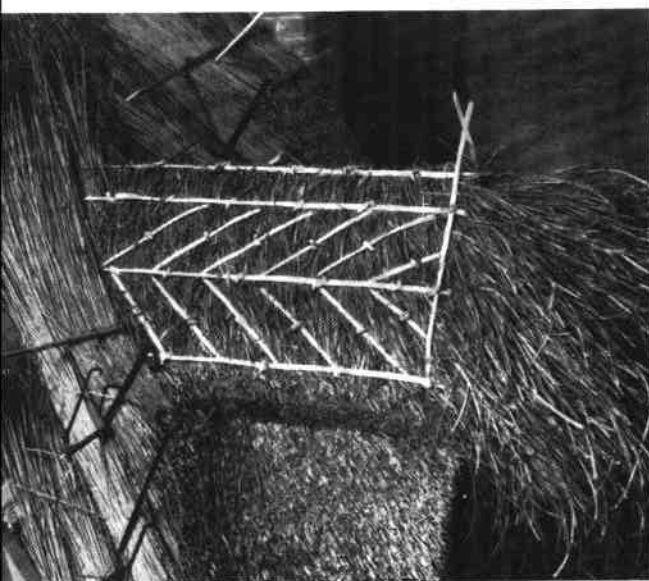
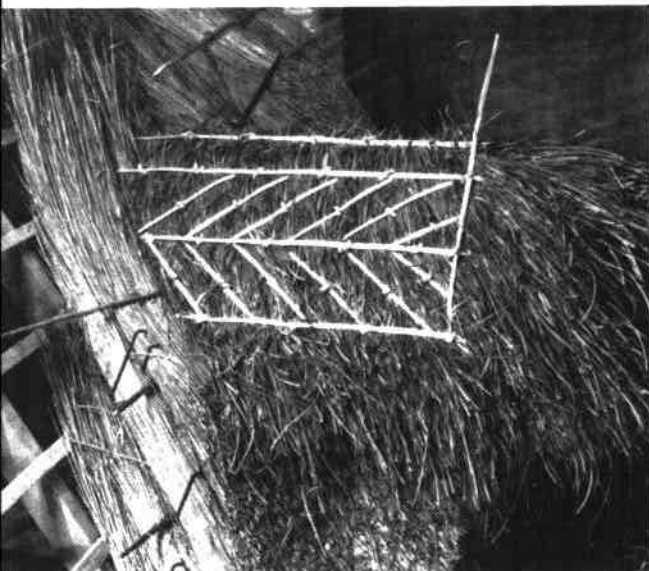
After the side courses of reed have been laid and all the tops cut off, the next job is to lay the skirts or side courses of sedge which also overhang the gable.

In order to build up the ridge to the narrowest possible apex, a small roll may be fixed with spars which are driven into the larger roll underneath.



The turnover ridging yealms are now laid and secured firmly with the top ligger. Although the process of laying a turnover ridge is described in more detail on page 183, the main purpose of the emphasis placed upon it is to show how important it is to ensure that the sedge ridge is worked tightly into position right back to the batten face of the main roof. It provides maximum solidarity at this most vulnerable intersection.

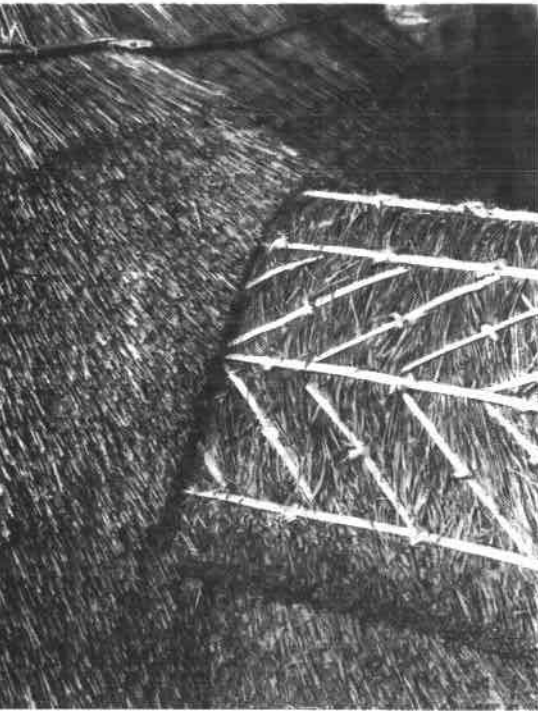




This small ridge must be sparred down and finished off as far as possible before any further reed courses are laid.

Liggers are fixed according to the appropriate design and the ridge is cut and trimmed, either straight, or with a pattern as required.

Having completed the ridge, the reed laying may continue from right to left, working the course to the apex of the ridge. It will be seen at this point just how much of the ridge is covered by this course of reed, thus emphasising the necessity of careful treatment when laying the ridge.



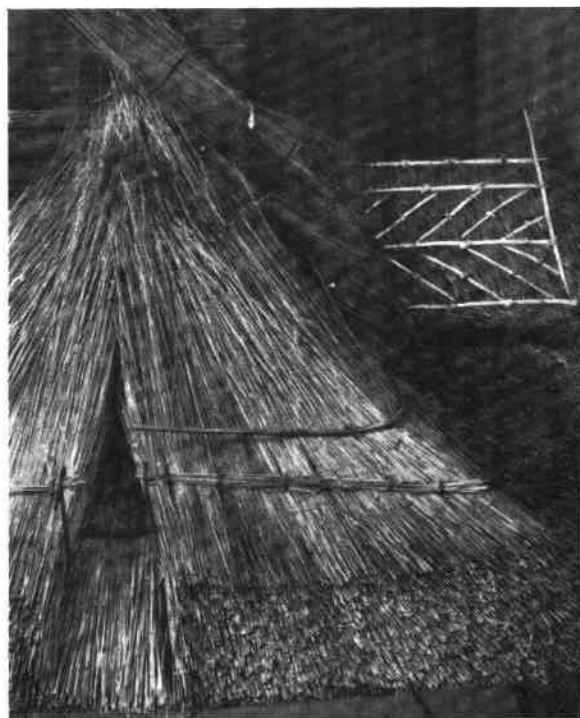
Working now from left to right the course is continued until it joins up with the course from the other side at the apex. This ridge or saddle-piece as it is sometimes called, may also be used to good effect behind a large chimney-stack, thus obviating the need for a lead gutter. The procedure would be almost the same as that required for a window, except that the gable would be dispensed with, the rafters finishing against the brickwork as closely as is permissible.

A half-hip can be a distinctive feature of a building and a worth-while feature when designing a roof.

Turning the hips presents no great difficulty, providing certain principles are observed. Assuming the two barges have been completed up to eaves-board level, the eaves-bunches may now be tied in, or alternatively hooked down with a hazel sway, whichever method is preferred. Care should be taken to ensure that the tops of each bunch point towards the apex.



The brow-course may be laid next, but it is suggested that the work will be greatly assisted if the hip-bunches are laid first on both angles as shown in the illustration.



As the brow-course turns the angle of the hip on the second side, it gradually merges into a full course in the main roof.

The section between the hips may now be filled in. This work can be simplified if the hip is of medium size, by placing the ladder in the centre and working towards it from either side.

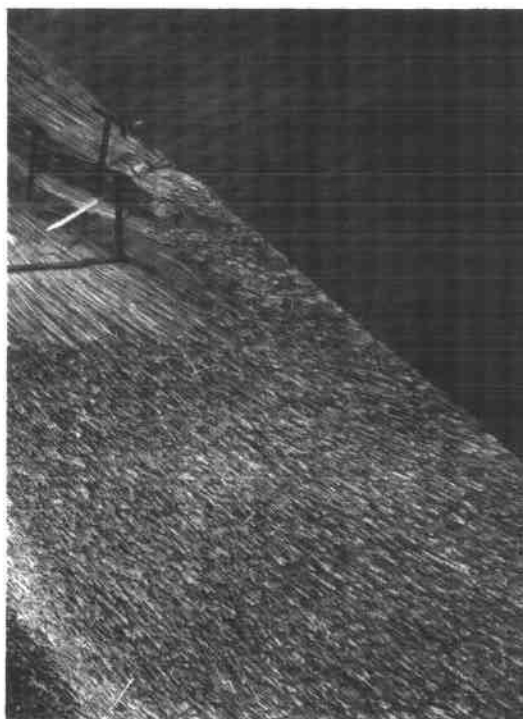
A simple join is all that is now required to complete this course, one full bunch filling the space which was occupied by the ladder. The sway turns the angle of the hip and the whole course is fastened down securely.



The next full course is once again started by setting the hip-bunches. It is recommended that this is done by laying two half-courses, the first being fastened before the second half is laid. By this method a very much stronger hip angle will result and the face of the finished coating will be tighter and closer together.

The two half-courses, together with the temporary reed sway uppermost, are shown. The end of the sway which holds the first half-course will be cut off, and after the whole course is filled in, a strong hazel sway is continued round from the main roof, firmly securing the course. This is repeated with each succeeding course.

Special care must be taken when forming the angle of the hip. Careful use of the leggett when dressing will produce a clean, sharp line, which is not only true to pitch, but also follows closely the direction of the hip-rafter.

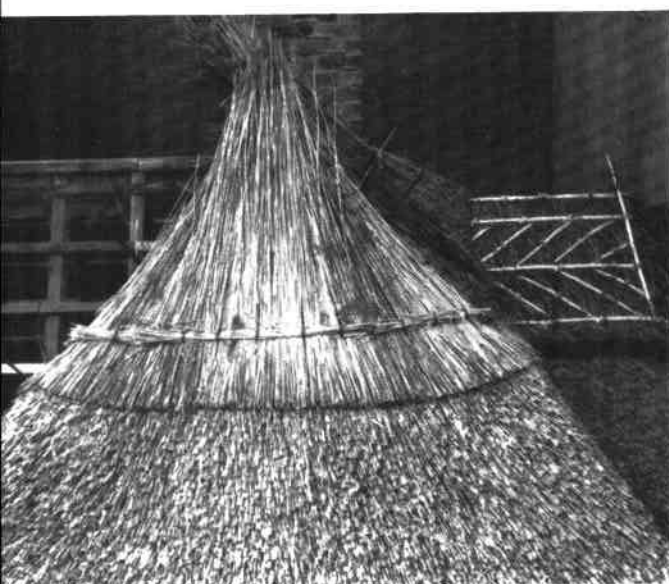




The courses naturally become shorter as the apex is reached, making it even more essential for the tops of each bunch to be carefully directed towards the point, avoiding congestion as the space becomes smaller.

Using a short cutting-knife kept for the purpose, those tops which oversail the ridge are cut off. The knife is held at the appropriate angle bringing it in pitch with the rafters on the opposite side. The blade itself travels just above the roll in order to avoid cutting the strings.

Though the roll may vary in size according to requirements, it is normally approximately 4" (100 mm) in diameter. It is made by tying a small bunch of long, coarse reed with two or three strings. Further handfuls of reed are then fed, butt-ends first, into the loose tops of the bunch.

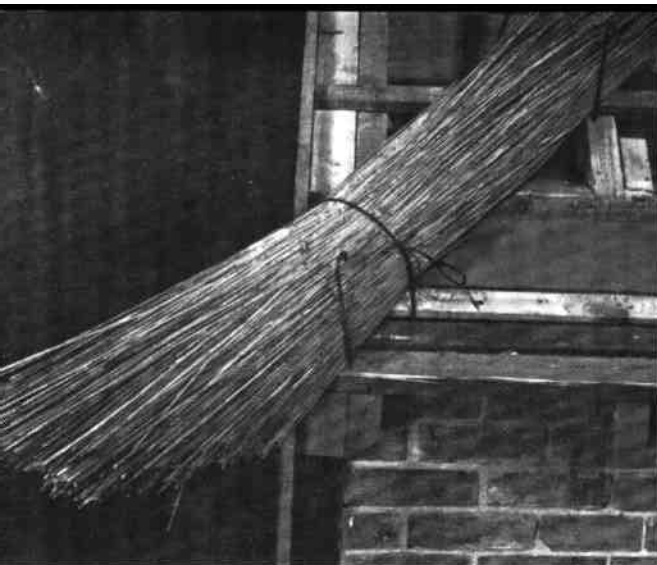




As the length of the roll increases, more strings are firmly tied at intervals of about 12" (300 mm).

By this method a very strong roll of equal dimensions may be tied. The length is determined by the length of ridge.

Approaching the left-hand barge, the eaves-bunches are turned well before the corner is reached. The corner bunch is tied in and the remaining space filled in afterwards.



A very useful method by which the final bunch can be tied when filling in the gap, is illustrated. A loop is made in the end of the string which holds the corner bunch.

The loose end of the string from the preceding tie is passed through the loop and drawn down tightly, whilst the reed is worked into position with the free hand.

The knot is finished off and the loose end of the string removed, thus completing a quick and efficient method of joining up.



Work on the left-hand gable is often regarded with some misgivings, but it should always be remembered that it is merely right-hand work in reverse, and that all courses must therefore start on the extreme left, and then be carried towards the right, where they join up with the main work. The bunches of part of the left-hand barge have been laid and the sway started.

Approaching the apex of the gable a full course has been joined up and swayed down.

The next full course is started on the extreme left, and like all barge-courses, it is laid in two halves, each half being fixed separately with a sway.

