



Leaf letter

Newsletter of the Friends of Selsdon Wood
Issue 2 Winter/Spring 2010



Growing Support for the Woods

Welcome to the second issue of the newsletter for the Friends of Selsdon Wood. The group has been formed for over two years now and happily our membership has grown but we can always accept more, particularly those who can help on our workdays.

We would like to extend our thanks to all those who have given their support to date, both financially and physically, and hope to continue to have your involvement in the coming years.

Throughout the last year we have undertaken various conservation and practical works, run events and given guided walks getting things done like the

We have also been very active with the council in placement of new benches and help with obtaining grants for planting new trees in the Jubilee and Centenary Plantations (see below).

If you are interested in finding out more or would like to become a member

please contact Dawn Gibbons at the Selsdon Library or why not visit –

<http://www.createforum.com/selsdonwoods/> and see what we have been up to.

We look forward to seeing you in the woods sometime.



Plantations set for Care and Attention

In 1977 the Croydon Girl Guides paid for the planting of the Jubilee Plantation in celebration of the Queen's Silver Jubilee. The Centenary Plantation was planted in 1983, when Councillor Dudley Mead helped to raise a fund to plant a stand of oaks to commemorate the Centenary of Croydon Council.

Planted with the best intentions of making a valuable habitat addition at the time, both plantations

have been rather neglected over recent years.

In our temperate climate, the natural progression of unmanaged woodland is towards stands of tall trees, with limited under-storey



plants leading to a reduced variety of habitat for animal species such as butterflies.

Our plans are to manage these plantations so that they can be restored to what was intended. These plans include obtaining grants from the council so that we can replant some tree and shrub species, increase habitat diversity and undertake some coppicing activities within the Jubilee plantation to encourage more wildlife.

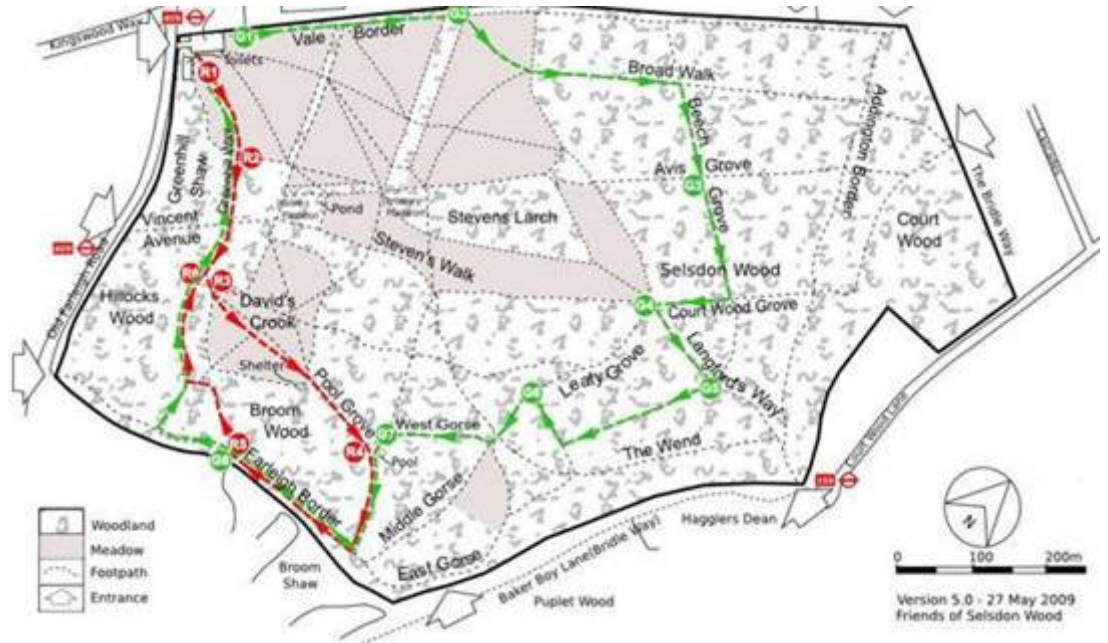
Friends of Selsdon Wood

Working to improve our wood



If you go down to the woods today

Why not try out our revised map of the woods? We have marked on the green and red routes as well as the benches, entrances and some other points of interest.



New Leaflet Now Available !

Throughout the year work has been going on to produce a brand new information leaflet.

With the help of the Friends, Croydon Council have developed a great new leaflet with a modern look and updated information on what to find in the woods and where to find it.

The leaflet is now available from Selsdon Library, but here's a sneak peek.



Dates for the Diary:

Monthly Meetings: Last Monday of the month at the Forestdale Forum except December and some Bank Holidays: 29/03/10, 26/04/10, 24/05/10 etc.

Work Events: Normally the 1st Sunday of the month, meeting in Selsdon Wood car park at 10am, working until around 2pm. Next one is 4th April 2010.

Bluebell walk: Coming again this spring time – join us on the 25th April

Open Day: September 5th 2010 – Bigger and better this year.

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Success of Summer Open Day

The summer months will seem far away now; we've seen heavy snow either side of Christmas and Spring is almost upon us.

But our Summer Open Day was such a success last year it would be remiss of us not to remind ourselves of it.



Did you manage to get along to the Open Day? Last year's was held on the 6th September on an uncharacteristically sunny day. We had an excellent turnout with about 400 visitors and feedback from those that offered it was very favourable.



Who else made a beeline for the Croydon Beekeepers stand?



We had a friendly display of stalls focusing on the natural environment including the RSPB, BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers),

raised about £200 on the day so, even including expenses, we should have a reasonable amount to re-invest in the woodland. Perhaps you may have some ideas as to what we could invest in – maybe some extra notice boards or more seats. It is Selsdon's wood and we would love you to take more interest in it. If you would like to get in touch



The Surrey wood-turners demonstrate working on the lathe.

the Downlands Project, Croydon Friends of the Earth and our own information display and fund-raising items for sale. The Selsdon Residents Association, the Croydon National Trust and the East Surrey Woodturners also attended. The Friends of Selsdon Wood



or contribute to the monthly meetings, please do not hesitate to contact us using the details below. We look forward to seeing you at next year's open day! DG

Why don't you join us?

Membership of the Friends expresses your belief in and support of the work we do. We appreciate that not everyone can take part in maintenance work or attend meetings but your membership encourages those that do. If you are interested in the group and would like to contribute, then why not email us at: selsdonwood@blueyonder.co.uk, visit the Selsdon Library or call 020 8405 1850. Any assistance would be gratefully received. Many thanks, Dawn Gibbons (Chair).





Sightings: Focus on Birds

Having spent the winter in sunnier climes birds will be migrating back to their breeding areas in northern Europe from March onwards. In Selsdon Wood one of the first to return is the **Chiffchaff**, several pairs of which usually take up summer residence. The song is a repetition of notes which give it its name. A relative of the Chiffchaff, which may appear around the same time in the spring, is the **Willow Warbler**.



In recent years the Willow Warbler has not normally resided in the wood but occasionally it might stay to breed. Both birds are small, greyish-green warblers suffused with yellow. However there are different races in which the plumage appears brown. The Willow Warbler's song is quite distinct from that of the Chiffchaff, involving a series of descending notes. The leg colours of the Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler differ in tone, but one distinguishing clue the Chaffinch gives is its tendency to move its tail up and down.

The **Wood Warbler** also passes through. This is a slightly larger bird with two songs; One a series of notes which sounds like piu, piu, repeated several times, the other an accelerating trill. Other warblers include the **Blackcap** (we have several pairs that breed in the wood), and the **Garden Warbler** which is basically brown. Both birds have songs which can be confused, but the Blackcap's has a flutier quality with occasional clearer notes.



Whitethroat, a slim brown bird with a white throat. It prefers gorse and small bushes from which it rises into the air while singing its scratchy chattering song. These may pass through the wood.

Lesser Whitethroat. A greyish bird with a dark face mask. Skulks in bushes and has a song which is a long rattle on one note. Warblers aren't the only returning migrants. The song of the **Cuckoo** is easily recognized in the

wood but this is usually a bird passing through. Resident birds which are present throughout the year include the woodpeckers: **Green, Great Spotted and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers**.



The lazy notes of the **Robin** are common in the wood, as are the explosive voice of the **Wren** and the hurried jumble of notes from the **Dunnock**. The thrush family is represented by the obvious **Blackbird**, a good number of **Song Thrushes**, and a few **Mistle Thrushes**. The crow family includes **Jay, Magpie, Carrion Crow** and **Jackdaw**. The only member of the owls in the wood is the **Tawny Owl**. **Sparrowhawks** usually breed and there are occasional visits from a local **Kestrel** and **Buzzard**.

A bird walk to identify bird song and calls is being held on Sunday 16th May, starting at 10.00am in the car park. Come and join us!

Owl Soundings: Autumn 2009

Having heard a number of owls calling recently I decided to take the chance to wander through part of Selsdon Wood. Starting at 4.45pm I entered from Courtwood Lane and turned on to The Wend. The first owl seemed to be calling from somewhere on Langford's Way. Once I reached East Gorse I turned right and heard two owls having a hooting battle in Middle Gorse. I gave a crude imitation of an owl and heard a reply on my right near where we erected an owl box, and immediately one of the Middle Gorse birds flew across to that area. I walked through Middle Gorse but got no reply to my imitation. I continued up Farleigh Border, again with no replies to my imitation hoots where I know there is a roosting bird. I turned into Greenhill Way then into Vincent Way and down to Jubilee Plantation. I tried a few more hoots then started walking towards David's Crook. As soon as I got on to the grass a female began

"kewicking" behind me then a male hooted in the trees between me and Greenhill Way. I entered "Bluebell Walk", hearing another hooting bird, then turned down towards Steven's Walk. Walking by Steven's Larch more hooting produced no results. Courtwood Grove and Addington Border gave no more results though I am aware of a territory close to The Cascades. I retraced my steps to rejoin Langford's Way and back to Courtwood Lane by 6.00pm.

Six hooting birds were heard, including one in flight, and one kewicking bird. I was unable to cover large parts of the woods and have frequently heard birds calling close to Courtwood Lane and from Puplet Wood. I suggest there are probably ten or twelve individuals though some of the calling birds might have been well-developed youngsters. Near Courtwood Lane I have heard what seemed like young birds with weak voices. TF