

Coppicing in the Wend - Following the sad and untimely death of Rob Sowter last autumn, a new woodsman John Sinclair has taken over the coppice rotation along The Wend. The work is done in annual strips over a rotation of approximately 7 years. Rob had completed two rotations and made a start on the third in the 2013-14 season with a section along Noakes Way. John has now continued the work to the north of this plot and you may have seen his vehicle parked there over the past two weeks. Like Rob, John is coppicing for product and many of Rob's old contacts will again be purchasing poles and pea sticks from Selsdon Wood. However there is not enough income from this to make a decent living and John will also be doing contract work elsewhere so he will only be in Selsdon Wood for a couple of days each week from now until the end of the season in March. He works alone but would welcome support and if anyone would like to learn the woodsman's trade he would be happy to work with you. Get in touch with us here at FSW and we will gladly pass on his contact details.



New Structures in the Car Park - Those of you who visit the woods regularly will have noticed that two new structures appeared in the car park in early January - see photo. They will form the foundations of two new larger bins that will be installed this month. I understand the new bins will take both general litter and dog poo. I will keep you informed of the progress of the plan.

















Notice Boards Refurbishment Project - Eagle eyed observers among you will also have noticed that the notice boards at all the entrances were removed last year. The old Croydon Council Information Boards in Selsdon Wood had become increasingly dilapidated and attacked with graffiti and, as they were almost 20 years old, their information was out of date. In the current financial climate the Council was not able to undertake replacement, so the Friends decided to see what we could do. We commissioned a new poster from the artist who designed the old Council leaflet and took down all the old boards for repairs and renovations. The poster is now ready and much of the refurbishment completed and we are hoping to get the boards back in place this spring. Selsdon Residents Association have generously donated £520 to the cost of this project and we have obtained a £500 grant from Croydon Council. Any shortfall will be covered by profit from our Open Day and sales of logs and charcoal. The photo shows Neale and John working on the refurbishment.

Winter Workdays - Our workdays this season have focussed on thinning out the Sycamores at the entrance to the wood on Greenhill Way. Our main purpose is to open up glades to let in more light, hopefully encouraging the growth of other species like Beech. Volunteers have worked in this area on two Sundays each month since October cutting down Sycamores, building a dead hedge, and doing our best to bring down the thick ropes of Wild Clematis. The work is healthy and enjoyable - we often have a bonfire to burn off the brash and cook jacket potatoes for our lunch - and we would love to have more helpers. Our next two workdays are on Sundays February 1st and 22nd - meeting at 10am in the car park. You can choose tasks to suit your strengths and abilities and work for as long as suits you and children (under parental supervision) are welcome. We supply the tools but bring your own lunch and drinks. For further information contact our Workdays leader, Ted Forsyth, at tedforsyth@btinternet.com

Last Month's Walk - Winter Trees with the Friends on Saturday 10th January - As last year this walk was not very well attended with only 4 visitors joining the 3 members of the committee. This was perhaps not too surprising as the walking conditions at present are atrocious with slippery mud everywhere. However we had a dry couple of hours and we were able to spot and identify 29 of our 39 tree species. We were also lucky enough to catch a glimpse of our famous white squirrel in the usual haunt at the junction of Langford's Way and Beech Grove. The spotters' guide in December's newsletter identified our 7 evergreens and January's showed key features of the bark of 14 deciduous trees. This month's guide focuses on some other clues to identification of winter trees that we looked for on our walk.

Although we do not always have a Nature Notes section in the newsletter this is still published on the FSW pages in the Selsdon Gazette and Forestdale Link. Take a look at the February Gazette for Ted Forsyth's fascinating tale about how butterflies overwinter!

<p>More Clues to Identifying Winter Trees</p> <p>Buds, catkins, cones, colours and profiles all provide additional information. Here are some features to look out for when identifying trees in winter. All can be seen in Selsdon Wood.</p>	<p>Ash Buds</p>  <p>Very distinctive black buds arranged in pairs on grey twigs with a large stubby terminal bud.</p>	<p>English Oak Buds</p>  <p>Stubby and brown on brown twigs. Arranged alternately with a cluster of buds at the end of the twig.</p>	<p>Turkey Oak Buds</p>  <p>Grey brown and arranged alternately like English Oak - but weirdly hairy.</p>	<p>Beech Buds</p>  <p>Copper coloured, long and pointed like a rolled cigar. Last year's leaves often still adhere to the twig</p>
<p>Alder Female Catkins</p>  <p>Female catkins on Alder could easily be mistaken for cones. They are woody and last through winter</p>	<p>Alder Male Catkins</p>  <p>Male catkins on the same tree are long and dangling and can be spotted in the high branches.</p>	<p>Hazel Catkins</p>  <p>Hazel is dominant in the understorey and the catkins are at head height and easily spotted.</p>	<p>Larch Cones</p>  <p>Larch is the only British deciduous conifer. The cones are usually found still adhering to the twigs.</p>	<p>Spruce Cones</p>  <p>Long and cigar shaped. The seeds from one have been eaten by squirrels leaving the woody core</p>
<p>Scots Pine Cones</p>  <p>Egg shaped, tapering to a point. Again one has been gnawed by squirrels</p>	<p>Dogwood Osiers</p>  <p>Red twigs and branches make the Red Osier Dogwood stand out in the hedgerow of Field 3.</p>	<p>Birch Profile</p>  <p>Silver Birch has a feathery pendulous profile with slender twigs that shake in the breeze.</p>	<p>Ash Profile</p>  <p>Typically Y shaped with two main branches coming from the trunk and reaching up to the sky</p>	<p>Oak Profile</p>  <p>A single trunk with a rounded canopy - lollypop shape. Branches typically twisted and gnarled.</p>