



Have you renewed your FSW Membership for 2020 - Our Membership year runs from January 1st to December 31st and it would be very helpful to us if you could pay your 2020 subs as soon as possible. Many thanks to those of you who have already done so and to those of you who have standing orders - we thank you for this as it certainly makes our life much easier.

Dog Poo - Our lovely Selsdon Wood continues to suffer from the blight of uncollected dog poo in fields and full poo bags discarded everywhere and hung on trees. This is such a pity - especially in light of the fact that, in response to our requests, the Council installed a number of new poo bins last year. New "bin it or flick it" posters have been put up on our notice boards but those who are responsible seem oblivious to the harm done to the environment by plastic bags that will last for decades and the hazard to other walkers posed by uncollected dog mess. We will continue to do all we can to deter them.

Winter Work - Our two January workdays were used for continuation of the coppicing in the strip at the top of Langford's Way. We cut old coppice stools, removing thin spindly stems, and we cut down individual trees. Much of the cut material was taken to the fire, some was stacked in habitat piles, and the usual material for fence posts was retained. We used the new post driver to put in new posts to replace several which had rotted. These were attached to the existing deer fence. In the process of the work we found several fungi including this colourful young Turkeytail amongst the brambles.

Clearance Work in Courtwood Grove - There have been complaints on the FSW Facebook page about the clearance work in Courtwood Grove and Pool Grove. This has been carried out by Council contractors who posted notices in the areas explaining the reasons for it. Currently there are many trunks left lying on the ground - most of which will, hopefully, not be cleared until conditions are less muddy and vehicles will cause less damage.

Cancellation of January Meeting - The meeting scheduled for 27th January was cancelled as there was no pressing business. Our next meeting is the AGM on Monday 30th March 2020.

2020 Sightings - Will you be the first person this year to spot a deer in the wood or one of our famous white squirrels? Who will see the first sign of spring and the first bluebell flower? Do please report all of your sightings on our Facebook page or by email to me at govierh@gmail.com and I will share them with all the Friends via our website and newsletters.



In view of current threats to Green Belt encroachment for house building, this quote from the National Trust Spring newsletter is very apposite.

'The need of quiet, the need of air, the need of exercise and, I believe, the sight of sky and of things growing, seem human needs, common to all and not to be dispensed with without great loss.' - Octavian Hill 1888

Last February we wrote about the Yews, some of the oldest trees in the wood. This winter on page 2 we cover another of our evergreens - the Spruce.

Norway Spruce

Most of the Norway Spruce in Selsdon Wood are to be found in the woods of Greenhill Shaw. However the more accessible specimens form a small group at the field end of Avis Grove, with one of them bearing the Avis Grove name board (right 23/3/12). The cone-laden tops can be seen from the Great Field peeping over the top of the flowering Blackthorn (below left 2/4/12).



The Norway Spruce is one of three species of conifer in Selsdon Wood (the others being Pine and Larch). It is an evergreen with distinctive scaly bark and short thick needles. The cones are elongated and much beloved of squirrels. All the seeds from one cone in the picture below have been eaten leaving only the woody core.



Cones are not produced equally plentifully every year. There were very few in the winter of 2018/19. Look out for them this year.

The Norway Spruce is the classic Christmas Tree, a tradition brought to Britain in 1841 when Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, introduced an old German custom of decorating a spruce tree with lights. Each year the Norwegian capital city Oslo donates a tree to New York, Edinburgh, Washington and London, in gratitude for the support that Britain and America gave to Norway in WWII. London's tree is always displayed in Trafalgar Square.

Take a winter walk past Greenhill Shaw and look west to see the green tops of the Norway Spruce showing amongst the bare trees. In Avis Grove look for cones along the path and around the base of the trees. Have the squirrels left any whole ones?

