

# Friends of Selsdon Wood Newsletter

May 2017

**The History of Selsdon Wood** – Liaison with the Selsdon Gazette has brought our attention to some interesting aspects of the history of our wood. The History page of the FSW website (see 1800-1890) now has a copy of this photo of Old Farleigh Road (then called Selsdon Hill) - looking towards Selsdon. The cottage shown in the photo, Cosy Cottage, is still there at the junction of Kingswood Way and the white gate on the right is where the entrance to the Selsdon Wood car park now is. The exact date of the photograph is not known but the lack of development of smallholdings in what is now Selsdon Vale means that it is pre 1918. (Many thanks to Dick Adamson for this photograph.)

We also have a date for the development of the car park, from an article in the Selsdon Gazette of September 1962 written by Douglas Thornton (a scan of the full article is available from the website). This tells us that: "A car park for use by visitors to the Wood is being constructed near the 'Greenhill' gate entrance on the Old Farleigh Road frontage."

The article also tells of the original thatched shelter in David's Crook, built in 1957 using money held by the National Trust for the Malcolm Sharpe Memorial Fund. (Malcolm Sharpe was one of the philanthropists who originally raised funds to buy the wood for the National Trust.) The shelter burned down some time in the next 15 years and was replaced in 1973 by a brick structure – which was also destroyed by fire in 2008. The shelter bore a small plaque on the inside back wall bearing the following inscription:

"THIS SHELTER WAS BUILT IN 1957 BY THE NATIONAL TRUST IN MEMORY OF MALCOLM SHARPE 1869-1948"

Mr. Thornton also reports that there were 2 drinking fountains in the wood at that time, one near the hut in David's Crook and the other near the Yew Tree Way gate. Although the remains of the David's Crook fountain are still there we know nothing further about the second of these and would be interested to hear from anyone who can tell us more.

The article gives this report of the management carried out in 1961/2.

*"The Management Committee have met on two occasions during the past year, one of these being their annual visit to the wood in May. Two full time keepers are employed; in addition to normal patrolling they control the number of pests, and during the past year the following have been destroyed: - Foxes, 43; Grey Squirrels, 101; Jays, 43; Magpies, 37; Crows, 6; Pigeons, 41; Stoats, 2; Weasels, 6; Rabbits, 137.*

**This Month's Walk Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May @ 2pm - Bluebells & Birds with the FSW** – The Bluebells came very early this year but do seem to be hanging on for our walk. Join us for a leisurely stroll to enjoy the scents and views and to listen for birdsong and see how many birds and spring flowers we can spot. This month's Spotters' Guide (see over) shows some of the birds you might hope to see (or hear) with a hint about how to recognize their calls interspersed with some of the flowers already seen this spring.

**Don't forget the Photo Competition** – Each entrant may submit up to 6 photographs taken in Selsdon Woods between 20<sup>th</sup> August 2015 and 19<sup>th</sup> August 2017. Winners will be chosen by a secret ballot of the visitors to the FSW Open Day in September 2017. Please submit your photographs to our competition organiser, Heather Govier, either in electronic format by email to [selsdonwood@gmail.com](mailto:selsdonwood@gmail.com) or as prints to 219 Owsard, Courtwood Lane, Croydon. CR0 9HG.



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| <b>Spring Flowers &amp; Birds</b><br>Here are some of the flowers and birds you may spot on our May walk. Ted will be leading and will draw attention to the bird calls & songs but these are some hints of what to listen out for. Look out too for shed feathers and perhaps also for broken shells found on the ground below nests after the broods have hatched. | <b>Ground Ivy</b><br><br>In many field borders. A large clump can be found beside the benches backing the Centenary.                | <b>Magpie</b><br><br>Widespread in fields & woods. Rattling alarm call.         | <b>White Bluebell</b><br><br>Look out for the occasional white Bluebell. They occur in the same places year after year. | <b>Ring-necked Parakeet</b><br><br>Often seen in groups. A raucous screeching.          |
| <b>Herb Robert</b><br><br>Beside woodland paths.  | <b>Buzzard</b><br><br>Soaring high over fields, especially David's Crook.<br>A cat-like mewing call.                                | <b>Yellow Archangel</b><br><br>Beside woodland paths.                           | <b>Greater Spotted Woodpecker</b><br><br>In woods. Loud drumming and a "Tchick" call - repeated rapidly when alarmed.   | <b>Bugle</b><br><br>In field borders and woodland.<br>Forms spikes – unlike Ground Ivy. |
| <b>Nuthatch</b><br><br>In woodland.<br>Usual call is "Weep Weep" but spring song is a sustained rapid trill.  | <b>Goldilocks Buttercup</b><br><br>In woodland. The dog-eared, chewed look of the flowers distinguishes it from other Buttercups. | <b>Song Thrush</b><br><br>In woodland. Varied phrases, each repeated 3 times. | <b>Green Alkanet</b><br><br>In car park.<br>Flowers like those of Forget-me-not but larger.                           | <b>Pheasant</b><br><br>Occasional in woodland & fields. A rattling "Squawk, squawk".  |