

SELSDON WOOD AS SANCTUARY.

Haunt of Nightingale 12
Miles From London.

BAN ON TRIPPERS.

Steps to purchase Selsdon Wood, a beauty spot a few miles south-east of Croydon, where the nightingale sings and columbine blooms, are being taken by the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society. It is intended that the wood should be kept as a nature preserve.

The wood, which is only 12 miles from the heart of London, is an ideally secluded spot in the middle of the triangle formed by the villages of Sanderstead, Addington, and Farley. Its area is 107 acres.

This part of Surrey, the chalk hill country through which the Brighton road runs, has developed rapidly during the present century, and it is desired to buy the wood immediately to save it from the builders.

It is proposed to enclose the wood, to protect the natural life from trippers as well as professional gatherers of birds' eggs and wild plants.

Selsdon Wood is particularly rich in birds and flowers.

NIGHTJAR AND WOODPECKER.

Among birds to be found there are the nightingale, nuthatch, coal-tit, blue tit, linnet, landrail, nightjar, woodpecker, flycatcher, and some 40 rarer kinds.

Flowers include the rare herb Paris, autumn crocus, columbine, bluebells, primrose, and commoner woodland flowers.

While it is proposed to protect the ground from trippers, the public will probably still be able to walk through the wood at their pleasure.

The land has been offered at £30 an acre—£3,210 in all—subject to the provision that the public subscribes the purchase money before the end of July.

The Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society has already been promised £400, and further subscriptions should be sent either to the society at 7, Buckingham Palace-gardens, London, S.W.1, or to Miss A. Bonus, Sarum, Radcliffe-road, Croydon.

DAILY

SELSDON WOOD.

It is sincerely to be hoped that the efforts being made to secure Selsdon Wood as a bird and flower sanctuary will be successful. The woods in the neighbourhood are being cut up for building purposes and many woodland species which have been harboured in their quiet seclusion will soon be lost to the neighbourhood. The bridle path leading to Farley which skirts this wood makes a delightful ramble where nightingales can be heard any night now.—DR. G. W. LLOYD, Mayday-road Hospital, Thornton Heath, Surrey.

A SURREY BIRD SANCTUARY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—With reference to the article in *The Times* to-day and the photograph which you publish of Selsdon Wood as a proposed bird sanctuary, the following delightful experience may possibly be of interest.

I was playing golf last evening on the old course at Addington, which is not at all far from the proposed bird sanctuary, when, as my partner and I came round the corner from the eighth green to the ninth tee I was amazed to see a hoopoe strolling about on the tee. My partner and our two caddies both saw the bird, which was not more than ten yards away. I asked the caddies if either of them had ever seen such a bird before. One of them said, "No." The other said that he had seen two the day before close to the same spot. If such a rare bird can even now be seen in that neighbourhood, the possibilities of Selsdon Wood must indeed be great, and it will add a further charm, if indeed one is needed, to playing golf at Addington.

A. HERVEY HOARE.

37, Fleet-street, E.C.4, April 28.

SELSDON WOOD.

To one who has known Selsdon Wood for over 25 years your article appealing for its preservation is very welcome. At this season of the year it is a particularly enchanting spot, but at all seasons it is attractive—in the summer when plant life is richest, in autumn when the beeches, oaks, and chestnuts are in their glory, and in winter when the Scotch and spruce firs group in dark contrast with their leafless neighbours. The abounding wild life includes the badger and the brown squirrel and—less welcome—the weasel and stoat. Of the Court Wood Sanctuary of 13 acres the Surrey Garden Village Trust gave five acres and the remainder has been subscribed for locally. If Selsdon Wood is added to this there will be preserved for all time 120 acres of the most beautiful Surrey scenery, for which all nature lovers will owe your paper (ever in the forefront of such good works) most grateful thanks.—MR. MALCOLM G. SHARPE, Little Langley, The Church Wav. Sanderstead.

Bird Sanctuaries.

The suggestion is put forward from time to time that an island in the Hebrides, or some other large tract of comparatively unutilized soil, should be purchased and turned into a sanctuary for wild birds and beasts in their natural surroundings. Such a proposal ignores the extreme diversity of British landscapes, and the fact that any single region, however rich in scenic attraction and the interest of its own bird and animal life, would include but a small proportion of the species which deserve to be protected. The example of the United States is often quoted by those who advocate the formation of a "national park" on our own soil. But the people of the United States have already formed not one large sanctuary, but several, and are alive to the necessity of adding more. Selsdon Wood, near Croydon, which the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society, and local residents, are now endeavouring to acquire as a nature reserve, is a clear example of the necessity of forming not one great national sanctuary, but scores, or even hundreds, of smaller ones if our rich but menaced fauna and flora are to be safeguarded. Besides the hoopoe reported by one of our correspondents from a spot near Selsdon Wood, but not in it, hardly one of the half-dozen scarcer and shyer birds described as haunting the wood

is to be found either on the moors and cliffs of the Western Scottish islands, or on the flatter shores of England, where rare sea birds are already protected at various points. The nightingale is not a neighbour of the gannet, nor the golden eagle of the bittern; and those who are eager to preserve the wild life of Britain in its natural surroundings should forgo the vision of one or two magnificent tracts with a limited list of wild species, and should help in safeguarding threatened beasts and birds, and plants also, in diverse spots highly favoured by nature such as Selsdon Wood.

It is all the better that the multiplication of such smaller nature reserves makes them accessible to great masses of the population. A single "national park" in a remote part of the kingdom would feed the interest of a very small number of people compared with half a dozen in each county. It is true that seclusion is one of the chief requirements of many birds, and especially of breeding birds, and that it is undesirable to admit the public to their sanctuaries except with careful precautions against undue disturbance and in limited numbers. A bird sanctuary can seldom be administered successfully as an open space. But with a sanctuary to serve as their base, many birds will colonize the fields and gardens around it, and the music of songbirds can be enjoyed without trespassing too closely on the thickets and groves where they dwell. The prime object of wild-bird preservation is to prevent the scarcer and shyer species from becoming extinct in their remaining haunts in each district, or in the country as a whole. If their nesting-places are kept free from disturbance many of them will not hesitate to visit and enliven those other nature reserves—no less valuable as public possessions—to the whole of which the public can be freely admitted.

SELDON WOOD BIRD SANCTUARY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—You recently published particulars of the scheme for acquiring, at a cost of £3,210, and vesting in the National Trust 107 acres of Selsdon Wood, Surrey, for preservation as a nature reserve and bird sanctuary. May I be permitted to thank the many readers of *The Times* who have responded to the appeal? Their contributions have ranged from a few shillings to £30, and have already increased the purchase fund to about £600.

May I add that, as numerous correspondents have inquired whether the woodland may be seen, Mr. Cresswell, the owner, has kindly agreed to allow the site to be open for the inspection of any reader of *The Times* on Saturday afternoon next, May 23, between 3 and 6 p.m., on presentation of a visiting card at Selsdon Park Farm? Selsdon Wood may be reached by motor *via* South Croydon and Selsdon Park-road, or *via* Addington or Sanderstead. Pedestrians who desire guidance will be met at South Croydon Station at 3.15 p.m., and taken for a pleasant walk across Croham Hurst to the woodland.

At the unveiling yesterday of the Hudson Memorial in Hyde Park the Prime Minister made an eloquent plea for the provision of

sanctuaries for birds and wild flowers. The Purchase Committee are confident that all who are able to inspect Selsdon Wood on Saturday afternoon will agree that no more beautiful or suitable site for a nature reserve exists within 12 miles of the heart of London.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

LAWRENCE W. CHUBB, Secretary.

Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society, 7, Buckingham Palace-gardens, Westminster, S.W.1, May 20.

WOOD WARBLERS AT CROYDON.

I have not seen any mention of the wood warbler in the list of birds likely to be preserved in Selsdon Wood. There has been a wonderful increase in their number in the last year or two. In this neighbourhood, within three-quarters of a mile of the centre of Croydon, I have counted a dozen pairs or more, and no doubt could have found their nests as I have in other years. Forty years ago we used to consider it a rarity in Savernake Forest, and yet, curiously enough, close to busy Croydon it is quite plentiful now in the part most frequented at week-ends and holidays; you may hear its ringing staccato trills and mournful piping on your approach to its nest, and watch its sylph-like form reaching for insects on the higher twigs.—Mr. DOUGLAS MOUNSEY, 40, Temple-road, Croydon.

SELDON WOOD BIRD SANCTUARY.

£2,610 REQUIRED TO COMPLETE PURCHASE.

The interest created by the announcement in *The Times* of the proposed purchase of Selsdon Wood, near Croydon, for permanent preservation as a nature reserve and a bird sanctuary was apparent on Saturday afternoon, when many visitors availed themselves of the invitation to wander through the coppices of this beautiful Surrey woodland. Over 70 varieties of birds, including the nightingale, find sanctuary in this woodland with its picturesque groves of oak, pine, beech, chestnut, and yew.

The coppices cover many acres, and visitors were impressed by the sylvan beauty of the wood, where the wild flowers in their season are no less interesting than the birds. The badger was at work, and among other animals in this sequestered spot are the hedgehog, the mole, the little English red squirrel, and the weasel. Such is the Reserve, with its wild life of the chalk Downs, which efforts are now being made to preserve as an open-air museum in a district where building operations are in progress.

The sanctuary which it is proposed to purchase covers 107 acres, and it adjoins Court Wood, 13 acres of which were secured last year as a sanctuary through the exertions of a few nature-lovers. The idea is to place the two areas under the control of the National Trust, which has consented to take the guardianship of the property if sufficient funds are collected for efficient supervision.

Visitors were guided through the wood by Mr. Lawrence W. Chubb and the owner, Mr. A. E. Cresswell, of Selsdon Park Farm, who has agreed to sell the property in order that it may be preserved as a sanctuary for birds and wild flowers at £30 an acre. A sum of £3,210 is therefore required to carry out the purchase. Contributions, varying from £100 to 1s., have been received amounting to £600, and an appeal is now being issued for the balance of £2,610 to enable the purchase of the property to be made before the end of July. The treasurers are Mr. L. W. Chubb, Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society, 7, Buckingham Palace-gardens, Westminster, S.W.1, and Miss A. M. Bonus, Sarum, Radcliffe-road, Croydon.

SELSDON WOOD NATURE RESERVE.

£5,000 STILL NEEDED.

A meeting of the Preservation Committee of the Selsdon Wood Nature Reserve was held on July 23 at 30, Dingwall-road, Croydon, the residence of Miss A. M. Bonus (honorary treasurer), who was present, together with Mr. E. A. Earl, Dr. H. G. T. Major, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lemon (representing the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), Mr. N. F. Roberts, and Mr. MALCOLM SHARPE (in the chair).

The treasurer submitted accounts showing that £2,800 had been paid to the vendor, out of the £3,300 representing the purchase price of the second section of 110 acres. Recent subscriptions included a further sum of £100 from the R.S.P.B., who were also contributing towards the wages of the watcher employed by the committee. Subscriptions with cordial letters of support had also been received from:

Lord Ullswater, Lord Vestey, Lord Wyfold, Lieutenant-Colonel G. K. M. Mason, Mr. John Buchan, M.P., Mr. W. Grantham, K.C. (son of the first member for Croydon), Dame Janet Stancombe-Wills, Dame Henrietta Barnett, Sir John Snell, Mr. Adrian Boulton, Mrs. Bernard Shaw, Mrs. G. K. Chesterton, and many others.

Approximately £5,000 is required to complete the purchase of the 110 acres, provide for the amount to acquire the third section of 42 acres bordering the Farleigh Road, cost of fencing, legal expenses, mortgage interest, &c. The Mayor of Croydon (Mr. A. J. Camden Field) and Mr. Prescott Row were elected members of the Committee. At the conclusion of the meeting all the members present visited the Reserve and expressed their appreciation of its beauty and recognition of the necessity for acquiring the third section, which includes some of the finest trees in the whole area. This, with the 13 acres of Court Wood already acquired, and the 110 acres the purchase of which it is hoped to complete this year, will make the total area 165 acres.

SELSDON WOOD NATURE RESERVE.

A meeting of the Preservation Committee was held on the 23rd July, 1927, at 30, Dingwall-road, Croydon, the residence of Miss A. M. Bonus (hon. treasurer), who was present together with Mr. E. A. Earl, Dr. H. G. T. Major, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lemon (representing the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), Mr. N. F. Roberts, and Mr. Malcolm Sharp (in the chair).

The treasurer submitted accounts showing that £2,800 had been paid the vendor out of the £3,300 representing the purchase price of the second section of the 110 acres.

Recent subscriptions included a further sum of £100 from the R.S.P.B., who are also contributing towards the wages of the Watcher employed by the committee.

Subscriptions with cordial letters of support had also been received from Lord Ullswater (late Speaker of the House of Commons), Lord Vestey, Lord Wyfold, Col. Mason, M.P., Mr. W. Grantham, K.C. (son of the first Member for Croydon), Dame Janet Stancombe-Wills, Dame Henrietta Barnett, Sir John Snell, Adrian Boulton, Mrs. Bernard Shaw, Mrs. G. K. Chesterton, John Buchan, M.P., and many other well known persons, who expressed the hope that every effort would be made to secure this beautiful woodland.

THE AMOUNT NEEDED.

Approximately £5,000 is required to complete the purchase of the 110 acres, provide for the amount needed to acquire the third section of 42 acres bordering the Farleigh-road, cost of fencing, legal expenses, mortgage, interest, etc.

The Mayor of Croydon (Mr. A. J. Camden Field) and Mr. Prescott Row were elected members of the committee.

At the conclusion of the meeting all the members present visited the Reserve and expressed their appreciation of its beauty and recognition of the necessity for acquiring the third section, which includes some of the finest trees in the whole area. This, with the 13 acres of Court Wood already acquired, and the 110 acres, the purchase of which it is hoped to complete this year, will make the total area 165 acres, and will comprise by far the finest Nature Reserve in the kingdom.

THE TIMES
AUG 4 1927

PURLEY & COWSDON
AUG 5TH 1927