

Friends of Selsdon Wood



Working to improve our wood

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Chairman's April Newsletter



Spring is with us a little earlier than last year. We can anticipate that the wood will be filled with bird song. Warmer days will bring out Brimstone, Peacock and later Speckled Wood butterflies. The first real signs of Spring are the beautiful white **Wood Anemones** but look out for clumps of **Wood Sorrel** with pinky-white flowers and clover like leaves. These are closely followed by our star flower – the **Bluebell**, these fill the wood. Follow our **Red route** posts up the hill from the car park to R6, turn left and follow our new finger post to Bluebell Grove – come on our Bluebell Walk. We must not forget other interesting flower species - Early Purple Orchid off Beech Grove & Court Wood Grove, Goldilocks off Court Wood Grove, Herb Paris (our logo) best viewed from The Bridle Way and the strange pale Toothwort off East Gorse. Toothwort is a parasite on Hazel and has no leaves. There will be many more flowers you can find – Dog's Mercury, Lesser Celandine, Ground Ivy, Common Violet, Wild Garlic and Cuckoo Pint. Do you know another name for Cuckoo pint? Take out a wild flower book and have a look for these flowers.

Look out for trees in blossom. Blackthorn hedges are covered in a mass of white flowers as they come out before the leaves. Hawthorn flowers come later, after the leaves have appeared. The profuse blossom on Ash trees appears before the leaves and gives them a mauvey-brown look when viewed from a distance.



We think the unidentified fungus shown in my March Newsletter could be *steccherinum ochraceum* an ochreous bracket with a distinctive spiny spore surface.

It's not easy, is it? Please contact me if you have other ideas.

Workday Update

The Friends have continued their onslaught on the alien laurels in Court Wood and ash seedlings in the Centenary Plantation. They have also extended their coppice plot by Leafy Grove with considerable help from the Council foresters. The foresters have also thinned some more trees along the Wend to provide a succession of growth.

The biggest changes are in and around the **Jubilee Plantation**. More shading trees were removed and the old rotten fence replaced with wire stock fencing and a gate. The Friends have completed their programme of planting 260 bird friendly trees and shrubs. The gate to this sanctuary will normally be locked to protect the new growth and wildlife. Please keep your dogs out.

David & Ted joined by John Zareba and myself, Dawn Gibbons in the Jubilee Plantation.



Work days – coppicing and general maintenance – **May 1st & June 5th**. Meet at 10am in Selsdon Wood car park off Old Farleigh Road.

You work for as long as suits you and choose jobs to suit your strength. Tools are provided but please bring a warm drink and food if you feel you need them. **A problem is that most of our work is being done by two 77 year olds, they really do need some help.** The exercise will do you good. Contact Ted for further details closer to the time on 020-8651 0558 or e-mail forsythted@aol.com.

75th Anniversary Celebrations

We are still awaiting confirmation if the dedication of a new Memorial Information board will go ahead. Approval is required by the regional National Trust covering the Surrey Hills area.

It is hoped that a display to promote the 75th celebration will take place at Selsdon Library during May. The local St John's, the Divine is also celebrating the 75th anniversary of their church at the end of June and we wish them all the best with their celebrations.

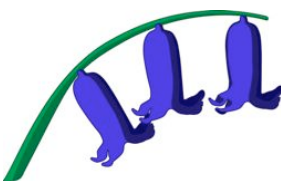
Further news of our 75th celebrations will appear in the next Chairman's newsletter.

Guided walks

We have two walks planned. Both led by a Croydon Park Ranger in conjunction with the Friends of Selsdon Wood and lasting around 2 hours. Meet at Old Farleigh Road car park.



The first is the **Spring Bird Walk on Sunday 17th April**. Start time of 12 noon. Blackcaps (pictured here) & Chiffchaffs have arrived to breed but we could see or hear other migrants passing through - Willow Warbler, Whitethroat and even Cuckoo. Our resident Song Thrushes, Blackbrds, Dunnocks and many more will be in full song. We will also enjoy many flowers and perhaps an early butterfly.



The second is our popular **Bluebell Walk on Sunday 1st May**. It is the bank holiday weekend but if you want to see the best of the bluebells this would be a good time to join us. Starting at 11 am. There will be plenty of other wildflowers to see.

Come and join us and see if we can find more in bloom this year?

The Gorse Area



This is the area at the northern junction between Middle and East Gorse. Up to the beginning of 2010 this was a Larch plantation. This was felled and we waited to see if gorse regenerated. As summer progressed hundreds of gorse plants began to appear but were quickly overwhelmed by bracken, which the Friends quickly cut down. This spring a few older gorse plants are flowering. The young gorse was beaten down by the snow but is reviving and the first flowers have just emerged. The Friends know that they will have to attack the bracken again and hope that you will be able to help. When the gorse is denser it will keep the bracken under control itself.

Membership Reminder

If you have not paid yet, please send in your 2011 membership subscription to Linda Lee, our Treasurer, It is important that we keep a strong membership. The amount is still £5. This all helps when we have to ask for special requests for help not only to Croydon Council but also to other bodies like the National Trust and the BTCV.

Members' meetings

Please don't forget all members are welcome to our monthly members' meetings the next being on Monday 18th April. This is early to avoid Easter. Start time at 8pm to end around 10pm in The Forum, Forestdale.



Selsdon Wood Photographic Competition

We look forward to seeing your entries to our Competition. Entry forms will appear in the Selsdon Gazette & Forestdale Link or phone 020-8657 0423.

Final Thoughts

As a final reminder - Don't miss the opportunity to come out on one of our organised walks to learn more about Selsdon Wood and meet up with other members. Despite a long hard winter the Spring flowers are now appearing in abundance. Our Bluebell Walk in 2010 was well attended and enjoyed by all.

If you can't make our next walk on Sunday 17th April, there is our Bluebell Walk on Sunday 1st May. I hope to see you then. As I write on 6th April the first Bluebells are in flower.

Dawn Gibbons.

