

# Friends of Selsdon Wood



Working to improve our wood

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## Chairman's June/ July Newsletter



Many butterflies emerge from their chrysalis in early summer and maximum numbers will be on the wing in July. Eggs are often laid in grassland so in warm weather pairs will be seen over areas of grass, led by the large numbers of Meadow Browns (pictured), Ringlets and a few Marbled Whites. Other species prefer different conditions and may more frequently be found investigating bushes. Most species will be quite happy visiting bramble while it is in flower, either for the nectar or simply to use it as a resting place. Later, Gatekeepers will be more evident as their numbers rise, and White Admirals will patrol the woodland glades where the females lay their eggs on straggly bits of honeysuckle.

Some species of moth are day-flying. The chrysalides of the black and red Six-spot Burnet Moth (pictured) often cover many of the grass stems, and the migrant Silver-Y Moth frequently puts in an appearance. If you are lucky, you may have a brief encounter with another migrant, the Hummingbird Hawk-moth, as it hovers to investigate a flower.



In a normal year there should be several hundred Pyramidal Orchids (pictured) in the car park field and those fields closest to the car park, but the dry winter and spring has had an effect. Plants may be late and numbers may be lower than usual but there should still be many Ox-eye daisy, Goat's beard, Field scabious, Greater yellow rattle and others.

As the resident bird species and the smaller migrants will have family parties wandering the woods, this is the time when Sparrowhawks fledge their young. Listen for the squeaky wailing of the young birds towards the end of the month. Great Spotted Woodpecker youngsters, with their red caps which distinguish them from the adults, will have been on the wing for some time but are still noisy.

## The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Opening of Selsdon Wood as a Nature Reserve was marked with a Charcoal Burn

The Charcoal Burn was organised over the weekend of June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> by Rob Sowter and the Friends. The location was the Friend's coppicing area at the end of Stevens Walk. 132 kilos (44 bags) of charcoal were produced; almost half being sold on Sunday.

This event marked 75 years since Selsdon Wood was opened as a National Trust Nature Reserve . . . . .



Rob and his team are loading the kiln.



Rob ignites the timber by pouring burning embers down into the centre of the kiln.



As the heat in the kiln begins to drive off moisture, Rob explains the ancient art of charcoal burning.



The kiln has cooled down and Rob examines the load of charcoal.



The dirty job of shovelling the charcoal over a sieve and into sacks.



Charcoal is weighed out into 3 kilo bags



Friend's Barbecue – Helpers and Friends enjoy a well well earned barbeque.

## Workday Update

Our July 3<sup>rd</sup> Work Day was spent clearing access to a number of benches, although the one we resurrected last year in David's Crook has disappeared again behind the bracken. A job for August 7<sup>th</sup>. We also cleared a lot of brash from around the Colonel Wood Memorial area (ex bird pool), although there is more work to do. We were rewarded by seeing a number of butterflies – Silver-washed Fritillary, Red & White Admiral, Comma, Small Skipper, Meadow Brown and we also found a shrew – dead I'm afraid.

**Work days** –Clearing benches and the memorial area and general maintenance –

**August 7<sup>th</sup>** 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. Contact Ted for further details closer to the time on 020-8651 0558 or e-mail [forsythted@aol.com](mailto:forsythted@aol.com).

## **FSW Open Day**



### **Selsdon Wood Photographic Competition**

We look forward to seeing your entries to our Competition. Entry forms have appeared in the Selsdon Gazette & Forestdale Link or phone 020-8657 0423. Please note the closing date is the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

## **Guided walks**

We have a walk on July 23<sup>rd</sup> 9.15pm – **A Bat Walk** led by a Council Ranger followed by an examination of a **Moth Trap** with Malcolm Bridge. Meet at Old Farleigh Road car park. Walk time approx 2 hours.

## **Membership Reminder**

Thank you to the members who responded after David Malins either spoke to you or left a note. We were hoping to hear from a few more of you. 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 BTCV.

## **Old Bird Pool Area**

Vandals, corrosion and cost have conspired to make it impossible for water to be piped up to the 'Bird Pool'. We will maintain the bird bath on top of the cairn but it will rely on you to keep it filled. We will continue to keep the plant growth under control and this involves cutting a few trees to improve the light. The bed of the old pond can only be maintained as a damp area - rainwater is unlikely to lie for long. As we have already said - the blackberry bushes around the clearing are proving to be a magnet for butterflies.

The inscription on the memorial is a quotation from Henry Van Dyke's poem 'God of the Open Air'. The final request is from Mrs Wood whose husband Colonel H S Wood's ashes are scattered here.

**These are the things we prize and hold of dearest worth:**

**The light of the sapphire skies, Peace of the silent hills,**

**Shelter of the forests, comfort of the grass,**

**Music of birds, murmur of little rills,**

**Henry Van Dyke**

**We dearly loved the birds**

**Be kind to them**

The inscription also appears on a small card on an adjacent post. The sandstone rock shows severe signs of wear; please do not attempt to clean its surface. Does anyone know anything about Colonel Wood and when was the memorial placed here?

## **Final Thoughts**

As a final reminder please don't forget all members are welcome to our monthly members' meetings the next being on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> July. Start time at 8pm to end around 10pm in The Forum, Forestdale.

Dawn Gibbons.