

Friends of Selsdon Wood



Working to improve our wood

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Chairman's March Newsletter

This newsletter gives me the opportunity to bring you up to date on what is happening in Selsdon Wood and at Members' Meetings, Work Days and Guided Walks.

Spring is coming to Selsdon Wood

As Winter gives way to Spring the **Winter bird visitors** begin to think of making the return journey to their summer territories. During March and April it is worth keeping an eye on your bird feeders for a visit from Siskins, eager to build up their reserves before the long flight home. Our **summer visitors** will also be on their way and the first Chiffchaffs may already be here, soon to be joined by Blackcaps and other warblers. This incoming migration builds up in April and May and during these months almost any species might make a brief appearance - so look out (or listen) for passing Cuckoo, Garden Warbler etc. The spotty leaves of **Early Purple orchid** are appearing near Beech Grove and Court Wood Grove. They won't flower for a couple of months yet. Bluebell leaves are also coming through earlier than last year.



Wood Anemones and Wood Sorrel will be among the first flowers of Spring - photograph by Lenny Burns. So get 'snapping' for the Friends of Selsdon Wood 2011 Open Day

Photographic Competition. An application form will appear at a later date.

75th Anniversary Celebrations

At the special Friends meeting on the 7th February we discussed a number of items that that may be used to help to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the official opening of the National Trust's Selsdon Wood Nature Reserve on the 5th June 1936.

They included – Charcoal Burning, Summer Flower Walk, Membership Drive, a Picnic, Tree planting and Nest box adoption. This might include the possible dedication of a new **Information Board** to the memory of Malcolm Sharpe (Chairman of the Purchase Committee) and all organisations and individuals who raised over £11,000 to preserve Selsdon Wood as a Nature Reserve and Bird Sanctuary.

David Malins said that National Trust Croydon & District centre had confirmed their agreement to fund an Information Board in Selsdon Wood. Croydon Council had approved its design and position. However this project still needs the approval of National Trust HQ. David is concerned about the supervision of the board on a daily basis and hopes to find a number of dog walkers, who will volunteer to keep an eye on it.

Gift Aid & Membership

Linda Lee says that we are still awaiting a few Gift Aid Declarations and Membership Renewals for 2011. Both of these enable the Friends to finance their work. If you manage

your bank account online, you can use it to pay your annual subscription & donation.

Workday Update

At our February meeting Ted Forsyth said that attendance is still low on Work Days – this is hindering our coppice and site clearance programme. Now Ted says that more thinning of trees by the Council has taken place in Jubilee Plantation, Centenary Plantation, Friend's Coppice area and along The Wend. The Friends are helping by disposing of the brash, either by creating dry hedges or burning. **We really need more volunteers.**

The removal of the rotten wooden fence around the Jubilee Plantation with its dangerous protrusions of metal has been completed. The erection of a new wire fence and wooden gate is almost finished.

Our latest work days have been mainly devoted to cutting up and burning the brash created by the Council thinning programme. The cutting down of seedlings in the Centenary Plantation is nearing completion. The Friends have also cleared seedlings from in front of the 3 remaining oaks in the corner of David's Crook, that were planted to mark the 50th Anniversary of the official opening of the National Trust's Selsdon Wood Nature Reserve. Unfortunately high winds and squirrels have seriously damaged 2 oaks and the original plaque marking this event has been destroyed by rot and vandals. The Friends are considering providing a new plaque, which will largely depend on cost.

David Malins reported that Council officials have repaired a dedicated seat and the removal of dangerous pieces of metal protruding from the path beside the Jubilee Plantation. As a trade off, he agreed that the Friends would fill in 2 dangerous holes in Great Field (Field 4). The Council has already filled in several depressions in the vicinity of the car park that have been a hazard on our Open Day.



Work days – coppicing or general maintenance –

Meet at 10am in Selsdon Wood car park off Old Farleigh Road.

March 27th, April 3rd, May 1st

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. The exercise will do you good. Contact Ted for further details closer to the time on

Tel: 020-8651 0558 or

e-mail forsythted@aol.com

We do need more help!

Guided Walks

There have been two guided walks this year both led by the previous Park Ranger. In January, the “**Winter Walk**” had a good turnout. Several Great spotted woodpeckers drumming and distant views of Redwing were the bird highlights. Quite a number of fungi were identified.

Can you identify this fungus found on our January walk?



In February, the “**Before the Buds Burst Walk**” took place. Ernie identified 23 trees – mainly by the shape and position of the buds and told us what each species could be used for. He found one Elm sapling – we can only wish it well. Hazel catkins and the first shoots of bluebell and wild arum peeping through the soil were amongst the early signs of Spring. There are no guided walks in March but please make use of the updated way markers and new signs to venture out into the wood with your friends or family to find further evidence of Spring. A project for this year is to publish guide leaflets for walks in Selsdon Wood.

Our next guided walks, lasting about 2 hours, will be:

The “**Spring Bird Walk**” on Sunday April 17th. Start time 12 noon.

The “**Bluebell Walk**” will be on Sunday 1st May. Start time 11 am.

Meet in Selsdon Wood car park off Old Farleigh Road.

Our walks are slow and easy – a meander, rather than a hike!

Member’s meetings

April 18th (to avoid Easter), May 23rd.

From 8 to 10pm in The Forum, Forestdale.

We would value your help in discussing future plans and deciding priorities.

A Top Dog



Rosie looks forward to a drier Spring as much as the rest of us - photograph by Andrew Hart from our 2010 Photographic Competition. Selsdon Wood is perfect for dogs and their walkers. Their clearing up of rubbish and droppings makes a big difference to the wood. Pity about the sad people who hang their offerings on trees and fences.

Croydon Council’s proposed Dog Control Orders for Selsdon Wood look reasonable. Their aim is to penalise - 1. Failing to

remove dog faeces. 2. Not putting and keeping a dog on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer. 3. One person being in charge of more than four dogs.

Find us on Facebook

Please keep in touch between events by using our Friends of Selsdon Wood Facebook page. Access this log onto www.facebook.com and enter **Friends of Selsdon Wood** in the search box. I have linked our page to the Woodland Trust, the Croydon BTCV and the ACCS (Association of Croydon Conservation Societies) sites which are all good sources of information for wildlife lovers.

If you request to become a friend on our Facebook page, this will enable you to add your own comments, articles and photos to the page.

Final Thoughts

We feel the Friends are making a difference to Selsdon Wood. The most obvious being the **new name boards**. We would like to put a few more up plus a finger board in the middle of the wood to direct lost souls, if we can obtain funding. You can obtain copies of our **new map** from Selsdon Library. We could do so much more if more people volunteered to help on our Work Days. As we say above - You work for as long as suits you and choose jobs to suit your strength. Tools are provided. When we say ‘Working to improve our wood’ it’s your wood as well!

Dawn Gibbons