

Friends of Selsdon Wood

Chairman's Report AGM 2010

The last 12 months has been a productive time for the Friends with projects including **the siting of 5 bird boxes** and one owl box to encourage nesting in the wood, **coppicing, maintenance of the Centenary Plantation** and organising our **first bluebell walk** for the public.

We have worked with a designer provided by the council to produce a **new leaflet** for the Selsdon Wood. It is hoped this updated leaflet, including a detailed map, will be printed in the new year. David Malins helped co-ordinate this leaflet, plus he created a summary leaflet and new members form, both of which have been regularly handed out to those walking in the wood, to publicise our existence and work since the summer. The **Forum website** has continued to have numerous visits and I feel that it is a worthwhile publicity tool, but more contributions are needed by members to keep it fresh and up-to-date.

The group has also been responsible for maintaining the existing **benches** and reporting damaged ones to the council. The Friends have managed to acquire six new benches for the wood funded by the council. **The Malcolm Sharpe memorial shelter**, whose roof was damaged by fire over a year ago, was demolished in June 2009 by the council on health and safety grounds. This was much regretted by the Friends and as a result it was agreed with the council that an alternative memorial would be provided. We have asked for a covered wooden notice board near the car park.

We are also beginning to build up a photo collection of the plants and other wildlife in the wood and would welcome contributions to this. Due to the efforts of two of our members we have located four different orchids in the wood.

There is a new project being discussed at present to rejuvenate the area known as the **Jubilee Plantation**, named in 1977 to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee when additional oak and beech trees were planted. The area also contains a pond. Discussions have taken place between the Community Partnership Officer, Meike Weiser and her manager, Andrew Williams, about how best to improve the area. There has also been a suggestion of working with the **BTCV** (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) on the project to help repair or renew the surrounding fencing.

We are also interested in working with other local groups and this summer we registered with the **ACCS** (Association of Croydon Conservation Societies) to enable us to share our ideas and promote the woodland in Croydon. Our Vice-Chairman, Rob Turley has also been involved in the **Croydon Bio - Diversity Plan** initiated by the Croydon Council in 2009.

In the summer, our efforts resulted in the repair of the **Wooden Bear** near the main entrance. It was found to be rotting at the base and had been precariously leaning over. However, the council provided a quick response to our request for help and it has been saved for the immediate future.

In September we held our second **Open Day**. There were 12 stall holders including the RSPB, the Croydon Bee Keepers, the Croydon National Trust, the Croydon BTCV and the Downlands Project. The attendance was around 350 - 400 people, double our last year's

estimated total.

The new coppicing season will start again in early 2010. Ted Forsyth and David Malins have kindly agreed to co-ordinate the planning of the work days and Ted will issue notices and be the contact point on the day for these. David will maintain a work log and liaise with the council and other organisations to ensure any relevant matters are dealt with satisfactorily.

As Chairman, I would like to thank our members for all their hard work on all the projects mentioned, which has made the past year such a success. I am especially grateful to those committee members who have recently agreed to help me with my work load by taking more responsibility for admin and other matters. Rob Turley (Vice - Chairman) will continue to act as editor of our newsletter "Leafletter" and is always eager for more articles and photos. He will also now manage the Forum site. Linda Morris (Secretary) will deal with the meeting minutes and issue them to those members without email and provide further help with the organisation of the Open Day including liaison with the stall holders. The Treasurer will continue to deal with all financial matters and will also be responsible for keeping the membership list up-to-date. As mentioned above, David Malins will act as our Publicity Officer and Ted Forsyth as our Work Day Co-Ordinator. Finally a special thank you to Liz Phillips as retiring Treasurer for all her help since the creation of the group two years ago. Also to Gordon Endersby for his contribution to the group especially with work days and Open Day support.

I hope that in 2010 further offers of support will come forward from other members to help those who have worked so hard in 2009 to make a difference in the Selsdon Wood for the benefit of local people and other visitors.

Dawn Gibbons January 2010