



# Friends of Selsdon Wood

*Working to improve our wood*

## Friends of Selsdon Wood

### Chairman's Report AGM 2012

This will be my last Chairman's report as I have decided to stand down after four years as Chairman. The Friends group was officially set up in 2008 as a result of my link with the BBC Breathing Places promoted at Selsdon Library in 2007. BBC Breathing Places has sadly since ended.

At the time there was no recognised support group for the Selsdon Wood but other local woods such as Littleheath, Kingswood and Croham Hurst all had Friends groups attached to them. So I decided to set up the Selsdon Wood group from scratch. At the time, there was no up to date **information leaflet** for the Selsdon Wood available for the public. As a result of the new friends group a new leaflet funded by Croydon Council, was published in early 2010.

Due to the groups existence and its members enthusiasm, time and energy there have been significant improvements in the wood. New benches have appeared and old ones maintained. Neglected areas have been highlighted such as the Centenary Plantation and the Jubilee Plantation and work done to improve them. The coppicing season is now a regular event in the wood run by Ted Forsyth, our workday Co-ordinator.

In 2011 the Selsdon wood celebrated the **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** of its opening to the public. A Charcoal Burning Weekend was organised in June to coincide with this event. Special thanks to Rob Sowter for organising this.

We have organised a number of **walks** over the four years the group has been running including Bluebell, Butterfly, Bird and Fungi walks. The majority were run initially by Ernie Thomason, the park ranger formerly based at the Selsdon Wood and also Meike Weiser, the Community Partnership Officer at Croydon Council. However, as our experience has grown we have begun to lead our own walks and also invite other guest walk leaders.

In 2010 with the help of the Downlands Project we put in **new guide posts** on the red and green walk routes. These had sadly been neglected before the formation of the Friends group.

The Friends group also linked up with the **ACCS** (Association of Croydon Conservation Societies). This has provided a vital link with other local groups and given us new contacts for walk leaders such as Malcolm Jennings, the Chairman of the ACCS and also Jane McLauchlin.

In 2010 there was a project to erect 50 **new wooden signs** in the woods. This project was funded by the London Tree and Woodland Grant Scheme and the Selsdon Residents Association.

In September 2011, we held our fourth **Friends of Selsdon Wood Open Day**. This open day has been well supported by local people and again it was due to the groups existence that it has come about.

In the last few months, Heather Govier has set up a **website** for the group which will provide a much needed contact for the group. Both the Forum site and also a Facebook page have been in existence but the website will be very welcome.

**As retiring Chairman, I would like to thank our members for all their hard work over the past year.** We have over 70 registered members now. I would like to extend special thanks to include Linda Morris (Secretary), Linda Lee (Treasurer), David Malins (Promotion & Project Officer) and Ted Forsyth (Workday Co-ordinator).

On a wider note I would like to give thanks to Meike Weiser, the Community Partnership officer at Croydon Council and to Ernie Thomason, the Park Ranger formerly based at Selsdon Wood, for their initial support and guidance to help me start up the group back in 2008. Also thanks to Gordon Endersby, a founder member of the group who helped to set up the workday groups before Ted Forsyth took over and to Liz Phillips, our initial Treasurer.

**I would like to thank Heather Govier for coming forward as the new Chairman and I hope all our members will give their full support to her in 2012 so the group will be able continue their valuable work in the Selsdon Wood for the benefit of local people and other visitors. I am sure the group will continue to be a success without me at the helm. However, I intend to still continue to be a member of the group and assist when needed. I will also continue to provide a link for the group with the Selsdon Library as community groups such as ourselves are important and help should be given to promote them.**

Dawn Gibbons January 2012