

Friends of Selsdon Wood



Working to improve our wood

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October/ November Newsletter

Message from our new Chairman - Heather Govier

I am pleased to have been given the opportunity of becoming Chairman of the Friends of Selsdon Wood as Dawn Gibbons has decided to stand down after nearly 5 years in the role. The Friends, Croydon Council and Selsdon Wood owe a lot to Dawn, who was largely responsible for getting the FSW up and running. Happily, Dawn will continue to serve on the committee and to be our contact in Selsdon Library. I hope my experience as a School Governor and my interest in all things natural will be an asset to the Friends and I am very much looking forward to working with you all.

Open Day

This was our 4th Friends of Selsdon Wood Open Day to promote the work we do to maintain Selsdon Wood. We were most grateful to those of you that came along with families or with friends and braved the elements to support us and our allied charities. It is a remarkable fact that the smaller crowd seemed to have more time to talk to us and to support us with larger donations and purchases than we have received at bigger events in better weather. You turned a potential disaster into a notable success. Thank you seems a very inadequate word.



A lot of hard work was done by the small band of Friends who prepared this annual event and helped on the day. To raise funds the FSW stall sold tombola tickets for prizes donated by Friends and some Croydon (sadly, not Selsdon!) businesses as well as selling white elephants, books and plants. We also had the regular 'Guess the number of sweets' game. We hope our information displays gave visitors a better idea of the range of work we carry out in the wood and encouraged some existing Friends to take a more active role in future. We were very pleased to welcome a few new members.

Our invited stalls covered a wide range of interests and goods for sale – supporting badgers, birds and bees, and selling wood-craft and pottery items, cards and jewellery. We understand that they too were surprised with how well their day went, despite the inclement weather. The rain did not deter the walkers either! Two walks were led by Friends and were appreciated by those who joined in. The younger visitors were entertained with a Scavenger Hunt and a Storytime Session kindly read by Selsdon Library staff. The 2nd Selsdon & Addington Scout Group provided excellent and much appreciated warm refreshments to keep the damp at bay. If you were one of our heroic supporters we would love to hear what you thought of it and receive any suggestions you have for next year.

FSW Photographic Competition 2011

We were grateful to the SRA for hosting our photographic competition on their stall. From the 75 photographs submitted, a short list of 55 were printed and exhibited. Over 100 people voted for their favourite pictures. Many said it was a really difficult decision to choose between the photos on display. The pictures had been printed for free by Snappy Snaps in Croydon – a much appreciated gesture of support. We are already planning to have the competition again next year and hope we will get even more entries than this year! You do not have to be a camera whizz to win – just able to take a pleasing photo in Selsdon Wood!

Winning Photographs



Senior – Linda Morris
'Late Afternoon Sun and Snow'

Junior – Melanie Barker
'Dog Hide and Seek behind Tree'



You will be seeing more of the excellent photographs. A fungus appears in this issue of the newsletter (see below) and others will feature in future issues. Many of the photographs will appear in future Selsdon Gazettes & Forestdale Links.

Linden Glade

For as long as I have visited Selsdon Wood, I have known the glade, where the pond used to be, as 'The Bird Pool'. But since Croydon Council cut off the water supply due to vandalism and cost and the pond base was cracked, the pond has ceased to exist. The Friends decided that we should seek a new name for the future that could be identified with an existing feature of the glade. The path 'Pool Grove' will remain as a memorial to things past - as Station Road, Baker Street and Mill Lane are. The two main contenders were 'Memorial Glade' and 'Linden Glade'.

'Memorial Glade' was a good choice because the memorial to Colonel H. S. Wood is clearly there but this name is a little solemn. When the Friends recently cleared up the site they discovered that there were six Small-leaved limes planted about 30 years ago in an arc behind the bird bath. Small-leaved lime trees were a major part of the ancient Wild Wood and were coppiced up to the Middle Ages to provide timber for building, furniture, carving, firewood and rope-making. Monks kept their hives beneath the trees for the rich pale honey produced. The flowers were used to produce herbal medicines and tea. In more modern times the wood has been used for guitars and wind instruments. When explorers brought back hemp for rope-making the tree fell into decline, being replaced by the more productive hazel which abounds in our Wood today. One of our Small-leaved limes has been pollarded in a gale and the resulting long stems must be typical of what was used for rope making.

It is a pity that our six Small-leaved limes did not appear naturally but they represent the trees that were almost certainly felled to extinction in our wood. They will provide a point of historical

interest to visitors in the future. I guess I will always automatically think of the area as The Bird Pool but to future generations it will be Linden Glade.

We will manage the glade for butterflies. The existing bramble patches will be extended to provide more nectar. The nettle patch will be encouraged to grow wider for the caterpillars of Red-admiral, Peacock, Comma etc. Common dog-violets will be planted for Silver-washed fritillary caterpillars and other nectar producing plants will be encouraged. The Fragrant Small-leaved lime flowers will feed insects.

Finally, we must not forget the birds and smaller animals – please keep the bird-bath topped up. Only you can do that.



Linden Glade - 1st November 2011 - by Linda Morris

The Month Ahead

Autumn is a period of changes. Among the birds, the summer visitors have mostly left, though a few, like Blackcaps, may stay throughout the winter. However, migrants leaving other countries pass through the U.K. and almost anything can turn up unexpectedly. Around this time Great Grey Shrikes are on the move and have been recorded in Selsdon Wood. Hawfinches, too, can wander from their breeding areas and might be found in the topmost branches of trees or at ground level as they split Hawthorn or Hornbeam seeds. Woodcock, though more likely to be seen in numbers near the coast, can occasionally be flushed from the undergrowth on an early morning walk. Then there are the species that intend to spend the winter with us - Redwing, Fieldfare, Siskin, Brambling. By keeping your eyes and ears open you may be surprised at what you might find.

It is also a good time to look for fungi. Apart from those emerging from the soil there are many others that grow on tree stumps and dead wood. Look for the thin white strands with black bases of the Candlesnuff Fungus or the multicoloured small brackets of the Turkeytail. Even with the help of a good field guide do not expect to identify all fungi at a glance - some need more detailed analysis.



Turkeytail from 2011 Competition
photo by Melanie Barker

Dates for your diary

Work days - November 27th, December 4th, January 29th

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 drink and food if you need them. For more information contact Ted closer to the time on 020-8651 0558 or e-mail: forsvthted@aol.com. We are very grateful to a few new volunteers but we still need more!

Members' meeting - November 28th

AGM - January 9th - with a Talk by Malcolm Jennings - 'Green Croydon'.

Please try to come along - the talk will be interesting and we promise the AGM proceedings will be short. Both meetings are from 8 to 10pm in The Forum, Forestdale.

Final Thoughts

Our AGM seems such a long way ahead but please make a note in your new diaries and come and enjoy an interesting talk and hear a little about us. Don't forget to take your cameras next time you visit the Wood - we look forward to seeing your photographs.