



Have you renewed your FSW Membership for 2021 - We really need your membership contributions now that Council funding for our work has been cut. Our Membership year runs from January 1st to December 31st and it would be very helpful to us if you could pay your 2021 subs as soon as possible. Many thanks to those of you who have already done so and to those of you who have standing orders - we really value this as it certainly makes our life much easier. As the Selsdon branch of our bank has now closed cheques are more difficult to deal with so do please pay by SO or bank transfer - or even cash!

Work by FSW in the Wood has been suspended this month due to lockdown - However, a number of falls have been cleared by a couple of FSW workers from the same household. You can see reports of this work with before and after photographs on the Workdays page of the website <http://www.friendsofselsdonwood.co.uk/workdays.php>

Coppicing in Noakes Way - This is currently being undertaken by a contractor for Croydon Council and is not the work of the FSW. This is a continuation of the cycle of coppicing carried out at one time by Rob Sowter who died in 2014. The photo shows the view of the coppice from Rob Sowter's dedicated seat at the junction of Noakes Way and The Wend. To find out more about this work and its value to our wood go to the Management page on our website. <http://www.friendsofselsdonwood.co.uk/management.php>

Mystery Red Tape - In the first week of 2021 one of the members of FSW noticed two instances of red tape wrapped around twigs in the hedgerow of Field 1. She reported these via the FSW Facebook group, enquiring as to what they might be. On further investigation both of the red tapes appeared to be on specimens of Cornelian Cherry - identified using a phone app. The flowers are just visible at the top of the original photo. We still do not know who wrapped the tape or why. The plant is grown in gardens for its yellow flowers in winter and red berries in the autumn. We shall keep an eye on these plants noting when foliage and berries appear and look out for further specimens.

White Squirrel sighted in Courtwood Grove - After a 6 month period during which there were no sightings of a white squirrel, one at last has been spotted on a few days at the start of January. However, all sightings were off Courtwood Grove - some distance from where white squirrels have been seen in the past (near the junction of Beech Grove and Langford's Way). Do keep a lookout if you are walking in the wood and if you spot one let us know where it was by email to me at govierh@gmail.com or on the FSW Facebook page

Cancellation of FSW Meetings - All scheduled meetings have been cancelled due to lockdown. There is no pressing business at this time but if some arises we could arrange a virtual meeting. We'll keep you posted

Please Keep Our Wood Clean - Although we welcome the increase in numbers of people visiting the woods during the pandemic, we have noticed a concomitant increase in the amount of litter. **Please, please take your rubbish home with you!!** This includes everything from empty drinks bottles to small scraps of paper such as sweet wrappings and non-native plant material such as banana skins and orange peel. However, the most common item of rubbish continues to be dog waste bags (both empty and full). There are now a number of special poo bins and dog waste can also go in general litter bins so there is really no excuse for hanging bags on trees.

Last February we wrote about the Norway Spruce which grows in a few places in our wood. This winter on page 2 we cover another of our evergreens - Holly.



Cornelian cherry, a species of Dogwoods

Also known as: Male dogwood,
Cornelian cherry dogwood,
European cornel
Botanical name: *Cornus mas*



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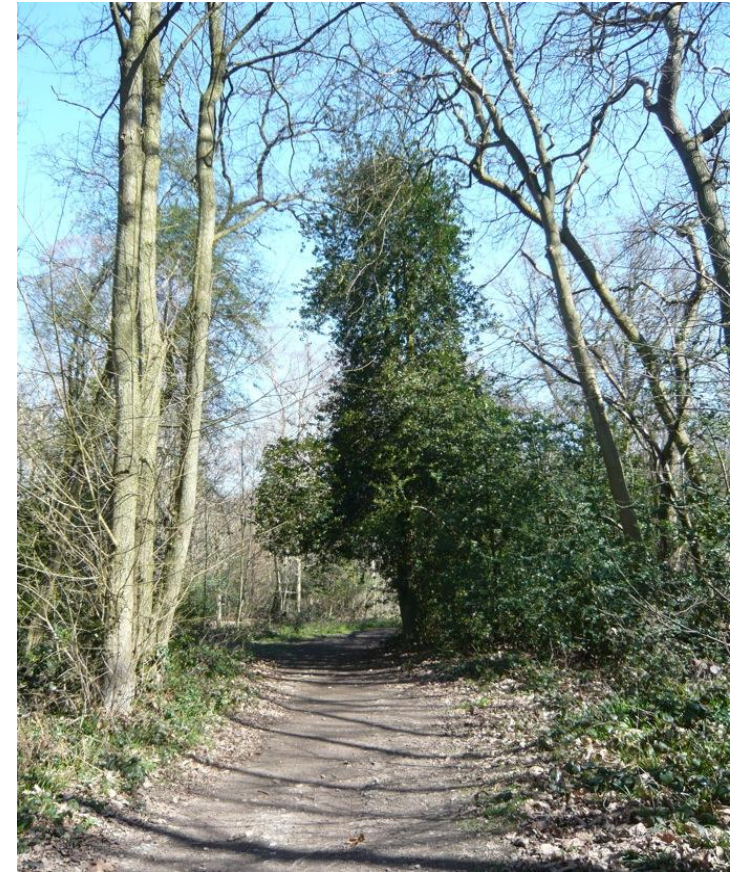
Holly

Holly is our most common native evergreen tree. It is widespread throughout Selsdon Wood and is very familiar with its evergreen leaves and red berries. On 10th January 2021, early morning freezing fog left all the plain green Holly leaves tipped with frost (middle photo below) making all the bushes look variegated. However, there is a small, permanently variegated Holly in Hillocks Wood (right 3/4/12).



Although usually considered to be a bush or shrub Holly can grow into a considerable tree and there are some in the wood that are as tall as the surrounding canopy. Perhaps the tallest is to be found in Farleigh Border at the junction with West Gorse (see right 27/3/12). The berries (see above 10/11/11) are toxic to humans but are eaten by birds in late winter after frost has made them more palatable.

Holly is dioecious which means that there are separate male and female plants with only the females producing berries. The photograph of the berries (top left 10/11/11) is of the female Holly in Linden Glade. The flowers, borne in May/June only on plants over 20 years old, are small and white. The male flower has stamens tipped with yellow pollen (left 18/5/12) while the female flower has a large green bump in the centre (right 18/5/12). This is the ovary that will develop into the berry.



Holly is widely used as Christmas decoration. This tradition dates back to pagan times but has been adopted by Christians because it symbolises the crown of thorns worn by Christ at his crucifixion with the red berries representing His blood. Although well-loved, Holly has a tendency to spread both by seeds dropped by birds and by branches touching the ground and rooting. It is considered to be invasive, preventing the growth of other plants, and from time to time we have to control it by cutting down some of the bushes. Cut material has to be burned (it regrows if left on the ground) and young plants pulled up by the roots are hung up to prevent the regrowth.

Take a February walk in Selsdon Wood and count the number of Holly bushes you can spot.

Can you think of 2 reasons why they do not all have red berries?

Can you find the variegated Holly in Hillocks Wood?