



Have you renewed your FSW Membership for 2023 - Our Membership year runs from January 1st to December 31st and it would be very helpful to us if you could pay your 2023 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! And have you thought about joining another local group - the Friends of Littleheath Woods? Their membership is also only £5 per year so for just a tenner you can support both of your local woods. For more details about FOLW take a look at their website www.folw.co.uk.

Selsdon Tree Work 2023 - You may have noticed the pink dots on the trees this 2022/3 winter. The trees so marked will be subject to felling or trimming by Council contractors. This notice has been posted in several places throughout the wood:

This February contractors will be felling some trees mainly due to ash dieback disease, with some others deemed necessary for safety reasons.

The trees to be felled or trimmed are scattered throughout the wood but there are some concentrations of badly affected ash. In the years to come, there will need to be an ongoing process of ash monitoring and potential removal. Healthy ash will be left, with the hope that there are some trees with long term resistance to the disease.

Where necessary the council will re-plant with suitable tree species.

The timber will be left in situ for the time being and removed when ground conditions improve to a suitable state in spring/summer.

There will be some temporary path closures so please follow all signs and directions. Please bear with us whilst the work is going on and we thank you for your cooperation.

Should you require any more information please contact the London Borough of Croydon Trees and Woodlands Section at: treesandwoodlands@croydon.gov.uk.



The David Malins Memorial Bird Feeding Station - Last year we set up the 'David Malins Memorial Bird Feeding Station' beside the Jubilee Pond in memory of David, a stalwart of FSW. We have continued to replenish the feeders, make repairs where necessary, and keep a record of the birds that visit. Highlights of 2022 were visits from a flock of Brambling and a bat in April, and Marsh Tits seen in November. In total 23 species of birds have been seen to date - see the Bird Feeding Station page of the website for details <https://www.friendsofselsdonwood.co.uk/bird-feeding-station.php>.

Work Sessions in January 2023 - Although the planned early January Work Session was cancelled due to bad weather, some of our team came along to work on other days to clear tree falls and carry out other tasks. Notable among these was the installation of refurbished boxes on the car park board and the separate post. The boxes will hold our map leaflets, keeping them safe from the elements - see the Work Sessions page <https://www.friendsofselsdonwood.co.uk/work-sessions.php> for further details. The late January Work Session was mainly spent clearing tree falls across paths and the removal of some Ash and Bramble in the Centenary Plantation. Again, there are details on the website.

For the past 4 Februarys we have focussed on the evergreens growing in our wood - Yew in 2019, Norway Spruce in 2020, Holly in 2021 and Pine in 2022. This year we look at the remaining evergreen, Laurel. This is an invasive species, and this month The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) volunteers will be cutting back many of the plants to help keep it at bay.

Laurel

Take a winter walk in our wood and look out for Laurel. You may see it being removed by TCV on 15th and 16th of February.

Laurel is dispersed throughout Selsdon Wood being most common in the northern section. However it is less widespread than it was as the Friends of Selsdon Wood are working to control or eradicate it, supported this month by TCV.

Laurel is a Mediterranean species, probably introduced into Court Wood to give cover for game birds. It is spreading steadily by suckering, layering and seeding and it is inhibiting the growth of other plants, poisoning the ground beneath it.

Laurel is an evergreen shrub or small tree having large, dark green, leathery leaves with a finely toothed edge.



The bark, leaves and the stones in the fruit are poisonous as they contain cyanolipids that are capable of releasing cyanide and benzaldehyde. Hence the leaves when crushed have the characteristic almond smell of cyanide. Entomologists seal specimens in a jar with crushed Laurel leaves as a way of killing them without causing physical damage and the use of the leaves in cooking by mistaking them for Bay Laurel - the culinary Bay - has been known to result in poisoning.

The tiny creamy white flowers have 5 petals and are borne in spikes called racemes in late spring or early summer (right 13/5/12). The fruit is a small black cherry (photo 30/8/14 shows ripening fruit at yellow and purple stages) containing a single stone which is disseminated by birds in the droppings. The flesh of the fruit is not poisonous to birds.

