

FSW Coppicing – The main work for the winter season this year is coppicing at the junction of Steven's Walk and Langford's Way. Effective coppicing follows a 10-year regular cycle which ensures that there are always some open areas. The Friends last worked in this area from 2008-2014 and so the next rotation is starting now.

Coppicing may look drastic but it is a traditional woodland craft which improves biodiversity. Only a very small proportion of the total 200 acres of the wood is given over to coppicing which involves cutting a bush or tree back down to its base resulting in the re-growth of multiple straight shoots. This management practice creates a more open habitat benefiting butterflies and nesting birds which enjoy the mosaic of light and shade.

A commercial coppice area has been maintained for many years in The Wend by Council contractors but the Langford's Way one is just the work of the FSW. However, like the commercial workers, we are producing pea sticks, bean poles and stakes which we will be happy to let you have for a small donation. If you are interested please get in touch with our Workdays Manager, Ted Forsyth on tedforsyth@btinternet.com or tel: 8651 0558

Sightings this Month – This is a very quiet time in our wood with most of nature dormant. However, the bare trees do expose the birds which are difficult to spot at other times of the year. Tony Flecchia has managed to photograph 9 species in December (see <http://www.friendsofselsdonwood.co.uk/sightings.php>) including a Redwing - shown right - which can be identified by the distinctive oval black patch around the eye and the vivid stripe above that can be seen in this shot.

This bird is the smallest thrush appearing in Britain and not previously photographed in our wood. Redwings are Winter visitors to the UK and Southern Europe, arriving from October onwards from Scandinavia and Russia. While here they feed on fruits and berries, but when these become scarce they forage in open grassland for earthworms. Then they are often seen in mixed flocks with other birds such as Starlings and Fieldfares. In Spring they leave for their northern breeding territories, nesting in mixed woodland and birch forest, low down in the usual thrush fashion. (Subsequent to publication of this Newsletter I was contacted by Ernie Thomason who tells me he did photograph a group of Redwings in 2007.)

Bird lovers may be interested in the RSPB birdwatch weekend 6-28 January 2019 - see <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch>

Your Membership Subscription is now due for renewal -

Our Membership year runs from January 1st to December 31st and it would be very helpful to us if you could pay your 2019 subs as soon as possible. Of course, this does not apply to those of you who have standing orders and we thank you for past and future payments as these certainly make our life much easier.

The FSW Calendar 2019 is still available for a donation of £5 - Phone 020-8657 0423 or e-mail selsdonwood@gmail.com



Page 2 of our Newsletter this month is a map of Selsdon Wood which we hope will encourage you to walk in our wood in 2019 and visit some of the places you may not have been to before.

