

**FSW Programme 2023** – There are no further walks until April - by which time the days will be longer and the weather, hopefully, milder. However, our AGM will be held in March and our workdays continue on the first and last Sundays of every month. The full programme is published on our Events page at <http://www.friendsofselsdonwood.co.uk/events.php>

**Vanguard Way Association - erratum** – In the item on The Vanguard Way last month I erroneously said it ran from London to Brighton. Many thanks to Colin Saunders, chair of the VWA for putting me right on this. In fact, it goes from Croydon to Newhaven, though it is of course possible to include it in a London-Brighton walk by following the Thames Path from central London to Wandsworth then the Wandle Trail to Croydon, and continuing along the Sussex coast from Newhaven to Brighton. Colin also told me that they know of people who have included the VGW when walking from London to Paris, via Newhaven-Dieppe ferry, and even beyond to join the Camino de Santiago!

**Workday - 4<sup>th</sup> December** – A group of us examined the Junipers we planted in David's Crook and found no Deer damage. We worked in East Gorse by the old bench (which will soon be replaced) and cleared much of the tall Gorse immediately opposite so that there is now a route through to the centre of The Gorses. The cut material was dragged into the nearby woodland and left as a large habitat pile. While working we found three species of fungi – Crimped Gill, Blueing Bracket and Coral Spot.

A further group went to the other end of the woods and began by removing a fallen branch on the Bridle Way by The Cascades. They replaced a couple of fallen guide posts using Metposts (at the junction of Avis & Beech Way and the junction of the Vanguard Way & Courtwood Grove). They went on to clear a few branches and to rehang some path name boards (Beech Grove and Bluebell Grove).

Full reports of their work are given on the Workdays page of the website <http://www.friendsofselsdonwood.co.uk/workdays>

**Outreach Support Work** – We have agreed to meet each month with a team led by Oliver Connolly, Director of Grow Wild Outreach, a service that supports people with disabilities and mental health needs, to help them contribute and take part in local environmental projects.

On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December, we welcomed a group for the second time to do some more work for us in the wood. They helped us clear the brambles around the old bench in East Gorse and to remove the branches of gorse which had overgrown to the habitat pile created by our workers on 4<sup>th</sup> December.

A Grow Wild team will return on 3<sup>rd</sup> January to continue helping to trim the tall and lanky gorses and move the cut material.

**Walking in our Wood in the Winter Time** – An interesting challenge for Winter walks is the identification of trees. We have seven evergreens which are not too difficult to name but the identification of deciduous trees when there are no leaves still attached involves careful study of the bark and twigs. Overleaf is a guide to 14 species of tree with distinctive bark and/or twigs to look out for on your walks this season.

**We wish all the Friends a Happy and Healthy New Year! Do visit the wood regularly in 2023 and let us know of any interesting wildlife that you see in our beautiful 200 acres. Photographs too are very welcome both for display on our website and as entries to our annual Photo Competition.**

## Identifying Trees in Winter

**Ash Bark**



Shallowly ridged, grey and hard and cold to the touch. Will not flake off. Widespread throughout the wood.

**Ash Buds**



Very distinctive black buds arranged in opposite pairs on grey twigs with a large stubby terminal bud.

**Silver Birch Bark**



Easiest bark to recognise. Silvery white with black growths. Mainly in the southern wood adjacent to The Gorses.

**Beech Bark**



Grey and smooth. Distributed throughout the wood. Small nuts (cobnuts) or their shells on the ground give a further clue.

**Oak Bark**



Grey and deeply ridged often with lichen growth. Softer than Ash - corky flakes can be broken off. The most common tree in the wood.

**English Oak Buds**



Buds brown and stubby arranged alternately along the twig with a cluster of terminal buds.

**Turkey Oak Buds**



Weird, hairy terminal buds that are very different from those of the English Oak.

**Sweet Chestnut Bark**



Grey. Ridges often appearing twisted around the trunk. Most in Broad Walk & Avis Grove.

**Hazel Catkins**



Hazel is dominant in the understorey and the catkins are at head height and easily spotted.

**Scots Pine Bark**



Grey to tan in colour. Deep ridges form vertical plates. Most in Steven's Larch. Cones beneath. Evergreen.

**Larch Bark**



Dark brown and deeply ridged. In southern wood and Steven's Larch. May be cones beneath. Needles shed in autumn.

**Spruce Bark**



Grey with distinctive, reptilian looking scales. Notable specimens at the field end of Avis Grove others in Greenhill Shaw.

**Cherry Bark**



Another easy one to spot. The bark is bronze and shiny with horizontal lines. Widely distributed throughout the wood.

**Dogwood Osiers**



Red twigs and branches make the Red Osier Dogwood stand out in the hedgerow of F3.