

FSW Programme 2024 – There are no further walks until 6th April - by which time the days will be longer and the weather, hopefully, milder. However, our AGM will be held on Monday 25th March and our work sessions continue, usually 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>



Work Session – 3rd December – Leaving Neale and Jim at work tidying the tool store, Colin, David and Ted took a trolley, loaded with tools and the latest of the benches made by Jim, via Vale Border and Broad Walk to Addington Border. Rain began to fall as a suitable spot was chosen and work began digging holes for the bench. With Colin wielding a mattock and David using a spade, work proceeded at pace and the bench was soon in position on the Addington Border (Vanguard Way) just above where the track begins to become very steep (see photo). The work had started at 10.40am and was completed by 10.59am! **Please note the next Work Session will be on 7th January.**

On 6th December – John raked some of the leaves and branches from the Linden Glade pool which is now establishing well.

Full reports of their work are given on the Work Sessions page of the website <https://www.friendsofselsdonwood.co.uk/work-sessions.php>

Muddy Paths Project 2024 - We are now turning our attention to renewing a previous Muddy Paths Project. We hope to raise some additional funds to be able to smother the muddy patches (such as this one in Court Wood Grove) with some suitable ballast/shingle to make walking the natural woodland paths a more pleasurable experience. We hope it would also mean the paths are more accessible to those with a degree of mobility impairment. We are conscious that natural paths are not usually conducive to wheelchair use but we do hope perhaps our Muddy Paths Project will help to make some areas of the wood more easily accessible. If you would like to contribute to the cost of this project, please visit our Just Giving page

<http://justgiving.com/campaign/selsdonwoodmuddypathsproject>


We have had an offer of help from the 5th Selsdon and Addington Scout group who would like to be involved in some work in our wood as part of their Naturalist badge. We are hoping that they will be able to help with the clearance of mud and the laying of gravel and/or some litter clearance in our wood. Will keep you posted about this.



We wish all the Friends a Happy and Healthy New Year! Do visit the wood regularly in 2024 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.

This month's gallery (overleaf) is a guide to the evergreen trees and bushes to be found in our wood. Spot them now when the deciduous trees are bare.

<p style="text-align: center;">Evergreens to find in Selsdon Wood in Winter</p> <p>We have 7 varieties of evergreen trees and bushes in the wood and winter is the time to spot them when the deciduous trees are bare.</p> <p>All photographs taken in Selsdon Wood.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Holly</p>  <p>Throughout the wood. Large one in Farleigh Border at the junction with west Gorse</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Facts about Holly</p> <p>Holly is our most common native evergreen tree. It is dioecious which means that there are separate male and female plants with only the females producing berries. This photograph of the berries is of the female Holly in Linden Glade</p> <p>The berries are toxic to humans but are eaten by birds in late winter after frost has made them more palatable.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yew</p>  <p>Widely distributed throughout the wood. Two large ones are in Beech Grove & Courtwood Grove</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Facts about Yew</p> <p>The Yew has evergreen leaves in the form of short flattened needles and red, characteristic berry-sized fruits with a hole in the centre. These are called arils. Both leaves and fruit are toxic to humans but the arils are eaten by birds. Like Holly, Yew is dioecious which means that there are separate male and female plants with only the females producing the arils.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Pine</p>  <p>Most in Steven's Larch. Those shown above are in the northern corner of David's Crook.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Facts about Pine</p> <p>Pine has distinctive, scaly bark and long thin needles, borne in pairs. The Scots Pine has the rounded top shown in the photograph and orange coloured bark. In Linden Glade there are some Corsican Pines with grey bark and a profile more like the classic Christmas Tree. The cones are traditional weather indicators, opening when dry and closing when wet.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Norway Spruce</p>  <p>Most in Greenhill Shaw. The one shown above is at the south end of Avis Grove.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Facts about Spruce</p> <p>Spruce is an evergreen with distinctive scaly bark and short thick needles. The cones are more elongated than those of the Pine and much beloved of squirrels. The Norway Spruce is the classic Christmas Tree, a tradition brought to Britain in 1841 when Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, introduced a German custom of decorating a spruce tree with lights.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Laurel</p>  <p>Throughout the wood. FSW are working to control or eradicate this non-native species.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Facts about Laurel</p> <p>Laurel is an evergreen shrub or small tree with large, dark green, leathery leaves with a finely toothed edge. It was introduced into Court Wood 200 years ago to give cover for game birds. It is invasive, spreading steadily by suckering, layering and seeding and it is inhibiting the growth of other plants, poisoning the ground beneath it. The bark, leaves and the stones in the fruit are poisonous.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Gorse</p>  <p>Found in just one part of Selsdon Wood, known as The Gorses. The trees behind in this photo are Larch.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Facts about Gorse</p> <p>Gorse is a thorny evergreen shrub with yellow flowers. The plant has a long flowering season from late autumn, all through winter and on into late spring or early summer. Gorse is related to the Pea family and the fruit are pods that burst explosively to spread the seed. The Gorse in Selsdon Wood recovered in 2009 after the felling of Larch trees which had dominated the area.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Privet</p>  <p>In the south facing boundaries of F1 and F2 where it forms the bottom part of the hedgerow.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Facts about Privet</p> <p>Privet is a thornless, low-growing shrub with erect smooth stems and small, oval leaves. Some of these may remain on the plant over winter and it is thus described as a semi-evergreen. Although cultivated oriental privet is used in gardens, the wild Privet is native to the UK. The berries are mildly poisonous to humans but eaten safely by birds that spread the seeds in their droppings.</p>