

FSW Programme 2025 – There are no further walks until 5th April - by which time the days will be longer and the weather, hopefully, sunnier. However, our AGM will be held on Monday 31st 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 Sessions in December – For the Work Session on the 1st November Valerie brought containers with plants and materials which were transported to Linden Glade where three Self Heal were planted. The heavy mob (Neale, Jim, Colin, David & James) took the mushroom seat and a suitable selection of tools to the junction of Langford's Way and Leafy Grove and planted the mushroom. The FSW had this mushroom seat carved as a gift for Ted Forsyth on his 90th birthday. Ted is a keen mycologist, responsible for many of the sightings of fungi in our woods, and he has, for many years, led the Fungus walk. The seat was carved off site by Alasdair Craig, from Essex Chainsaw Carving.

The elves (Linda, Ted, Valerie, and a couple of youngsters doing their Duke of Edinburgh awards) worked in Middle Gorse to clear and widen the overgrown path into the centre of The Gorses. They managed to get into the centre of The Gorses but the rain was intensifying so they stopped early. As they were gathering the tools the mushroom group arrived and were able to help to transfer the tools back to the car park. Other work in December included planting and weeding on the butterfly bank, clearance of the Jubilee Pond and it's surrounds, and the clearance of a small fallen branch near the Courtwood Lane entrance.

Additionally, the pair of boys working for their D of E awards came on December 28th to clear litter from the start of Langford's Way and the area of Court Wood adjoining the road. They did a superb job – many thanks to Adam, Shayan and Adam's mum. And with perfect timing the Council cleared the bins early the next morning so now all the bags - and the pink suitcase - have been taken away.

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

Benches in our Wood – Thanks to an article by Janet Sharp in the Selsdon Gazette our attention has been drawn to the Open Benches website at <https://openbenches.org>. This is a site that lists over 32 thousand dedicated benches throughout the UK, including 10 in our wood see <https://openbenches.org/location/United%20Kingdom/South%20Croydon/Selsdon%20Wood>.

For each bench they show a photo of the bench itself, a closeup of the dedication, the view from the bench, and a map showing the location. To add benches, you use your phone's camera (either iPhone or Android) with the camera set to "save location" (or similar). You can then take photos of the bench, the inscription and the view from the bench and upload them to <https://openbenches.org/add>. The upload will automatically detect the geolocation of the bench and add a map to show this.

We'd love to see more of our benches added to Open Benches so do please have a go! If you do put a bench up, get in touch with us so that we can take a look.


The Seats page of our website <https://www.friendsofselsdonwood.co.uk/seats.php> provides a listing of all 70 seats and benches with details of location and dedications.

We wish all the Friends a Happy and Healthy New Year! Do visit the wood regularly in 2025 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 competition to choose photos for the next FSW Calendar.

(There are just five of the 2025 calendars left – contact me if you would like one.)



<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>