

Friends of Selsdon Wood Newsletter

January 2026

FSW Programme 2026 – There are no further walks until 11th April - by which time the days will be longer and the weather, hopefully, sunnier. However, our AGM will be held on Monday 30th 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 – On 7th December a group including some of the Duke of Edinburgh volunteers put up some stakes and netting to improve the protection of the Juniper saplings in David's' Crook. We also turned off the water supply to the toilets to reduce the risk of winter bursts. The supply at the Vincent Avenue gate was turned off on 15th December.

On 10th December a few plants were added to Linden Glade to improve the look of the area around the pool.

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

Donations Welcome – The Just Giving pages are closed now and we have no new ones set up at present but, of course, donations are always welcome. Please make these direct to Friends of Selsdon Wood at Barclays Bank, Croydon Branch, Account No. 80883832, Sort Code 20-24-61 or direct to one of us as you chat to us in the wood.

And many thanks to all who have already renewed memberships and made donations this year. It is you who provide the wherewithal for the FSW to continue our work of looking after our much-loved wood.

We wish all the Friends a Happy and Healthy New Year! Do visit the wood regularly in 2026 and let us know of any interesting wildlife that you see in our beautiful 200 acres. This lovely Robin was seen in the snow on January 2nd.

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 a few of the 2026 calendars left – contact us 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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>