



A Heart-warming Story - I have heard a very heart-warming story of something that took place in our wood. In early February a couple walking in the wood found a lady with a broken wrist. They stopped to help her and tried to call an ambulance but were told they'd have such a long wait she should take herself to hospital! They helped her lock her car and then took her to A&E and she had an operation the next day. Her son called us later that day to explain why the car would be left in the car park for a few days as they had no one to drive it home and were concerned it might get clamped or towed away. We went to check it was locked and nothing valuable on show. It was retrieved the next morning.

Although the lady has thanked them herself, I'd like, on behalf of the Friends, to thank the couple too for being such Good Samaritans. This shows what wonderful, helpful people there are in our community but also gives us a reminder that we should all keep a phone and/or emergency details on us when walking alone.

Winter Workdays - The planned focus for Workdays this month was the clearance work in the Gorses area and the laying of wood chip over some of the worst muddy patches in Farleigh Border and Vale Border. In the Gorses a wide area has been cleared and a path has now been opened up through from Middle Gorse to East Gorse. However, the February storms gave us plenty more work to do with over 24 tree falls across paths. We had an unscheduled workday on 22nd February to clear the majority of these - see photo - and dealt with others on the official workday on 27th. That has left X that we are unable to deal with and we have reported these to the Council Tree and Woodland Officer. Another of the Friends painted some new "T" markings in the car park to help the cars park tidily. They seem to be working well to date.



Sightings of Interest - As usual the Sightings page of the website contains a record of species of animals, plants and fungi seen so far this year. Most of the record is in the form of photographs but in addition multiple Common Pipistrelles were recorded with a bat detector on 8th February and two Brimstone butterflies were seen on 9th February. We also now have separate pages for the first sightings of each fungus, flower, bird, other vertebrates and invertebrates. There have been 6 flowers spotted so far this year and 25 different species of birds - many of them at the new memorial feeding station. Seven species have been photographed on the feeders so far and 6 other species photographed around the Feeding Station and pool. Take a look at <http://www.friendsofselsdonwood.co.uk/sightings.php> and if you spot anything new do please let us know.

Unpleasant Sightings - Sadly two of the sightings are not such good news. A couple of old tyres were left in the mud in Linden Glade. These have now been cleared away thanks to a couple of the Friends and Croydon Council. We are also sad to report that a dog waste bin was found burnt out at the Yew Tree Way entrance. The plastic lid was completely destroyed. One of the Friends was able to repair it but the following day the Council came with a brand new replacement. It is such a shame that some visitors to the wood choose to abuse it!!

Our Walks Programme Starts at the Beginning of Next Month - with our Spring Walk on Saturday April 2nd followed by our annual Bluebells and Birds Walk on Saturday 7th May. It is, of course, impossible to predict exactly when the bluebells will be at their best but we hope they will come good for one of these walks and we would love to see you there.

The FSW AGM will be held on Monday March 28th at 8pm at the Forestdale Forum - The meeting is open to all members of FSW and we would love to see you there. The agenda will be published on the AGM page of the website one week before the meeting.

Geocaching an Overview by Chris Green

Through your walking in Selsdon Wood and beyond, you may have come across a small Tupperware box or two. Contained inside would be a notebook and perhaps some small toys. You may have wondered whether someone has misplaced their lunch box. Chances are, you have actually found a Geocache. If you've not found one by accident, you've probably been within a dozen feet of one and not realised it.

Geocaching is an outdoor, GPS based 'treasure hunt'. The basic premise is to use a GPS device (such as a modern smart phone) to find containers, sign a log and then register the find on a mobile app. Geocaching was first set up in 2000 and now has over 2 million 'hides' around the globe - including in Antarctica, on Everest and even on the Mars Rover. Closer to home, there are over 2 dozen caches in Selsdon Wood, including an excellent Harry Potter themed series, and hundreds around the UK.

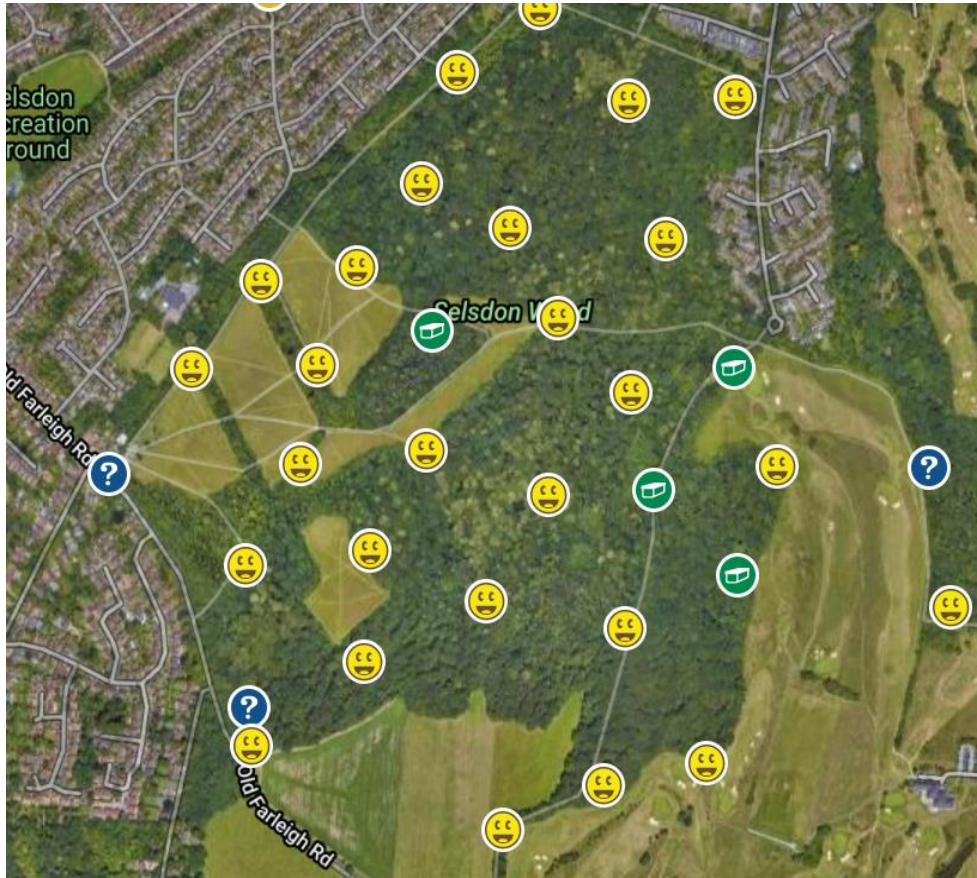


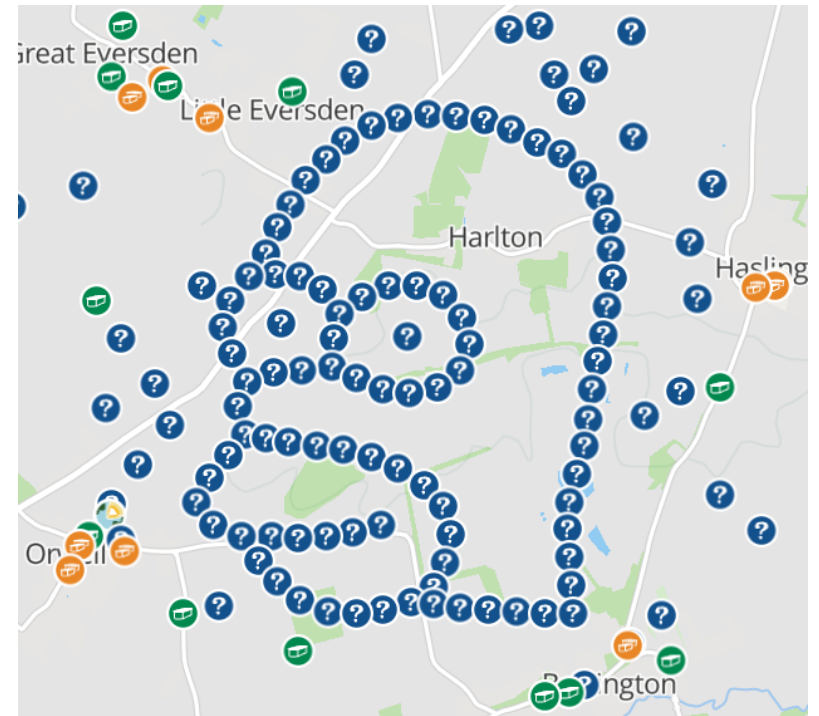
Figure 1 - a smiley face indicates a find; the green represents a 'traditional'; the blue, a 'puzzle'



There are various geocache 'types' - the basic 'log in a container' being a 'traditional'; a 'multi' which involves visiting several locations; and a 'mystery' which requires some puzzle solving.

Figure 1 - mystery caches in the shape of 'geoart'

Taking part is very easy. You register yourself at geocaching.com - a free account will give you access to some caches but a nominal payment will open up all locations - ; download the app; take a pen and perhaps some tweezers (some logs are very small); and get out and start looking!



If you have small children, or perhaps just enjoy being outdoors, it's a great - and very addictive - hobby. Happy hunting!