

Friends of Selsdon Wood

Working to improve our wood



Selsdon Wood Local Nature Reserve

also known as the 'Bird Sanctuary'

Red & Green Walking Routes

81 hectare (200 acre) Selsdon Wood offers a range of meadow and woodland habitats.

ABOUT THE ROUTES

QR codes at numbered posts link to FSW website.

Both routes are marked by wooden posts and start at the car park.

They can be walked in reverse.

RED (R1 to 6) 1.6km or 1 mile. Easy walk, but a moderate slope at the start.

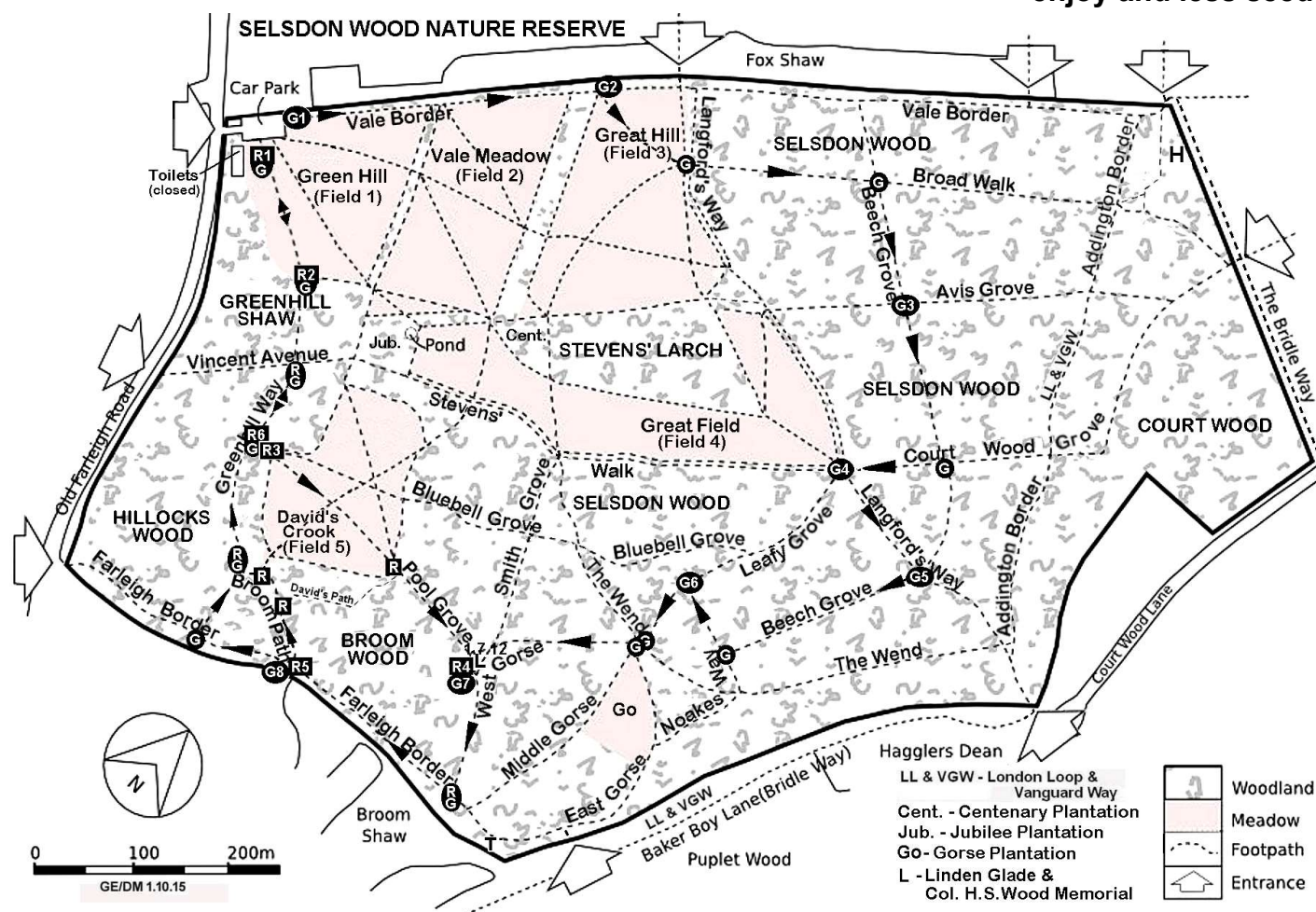
GREEN (G1 to 8) 3km or 2 miles. Some slopes and uneven paths.

R & G - Un-numbered directional posts.

Diversions are (bracketed).

Taking identification books will add to your enjoyment

Please do not pick the flowers - there will be fewer for others to enjoy and less seed to grow next year.



The Friends of Selsdon Wood are volunteers working with Croydon Council to ensure that Selsdon Wood is maintained for the benefit of the flora and fauna, as well as for the enjoyment of the public. Look for our work which includes removing foreign trees, creating diverse habitats & putting up nest boxes.

To contact the Friends: phone 020-8657 0423 or e-mail: selsdonwood@gmail.com

Our website: www.friendsofselsdonwood.co.uk has a wealth of information about Selsdon Wood and what we do.

We would welcome your support. To join us 'tap' Contact Us on our Home Page.

Flora & Fauna

We can only name a few of the natural things you may see

The meadows in spring and early summer are a mass of wild flowers with their attendant butterflies and day-flying moths. Wild flowers include - Ox-eye Daisy, Field Scabious and Greater Yellow Rattle - this plant parasitizes grass roots and increases biodiversity by restricting the grass growth. Early purple and pyramidal orchids are found and a few others appear periodically. Butterflies and moths include: Marbled White, Common Blue, Meadow Brown, Small Heath, Gatekeeper and 6-spot Burnet.

In the woodland, Honeysuckle can be seen growing through the branches of trees. This is the food plant of White Admiral caterpillars. The woods provide a profusion of wild flowers in their seasons. Bluebells and Wood Anemones in spring, followed by Yellow Archangel, Wood Spurge, Foxglove and Dog's Mercury. Look along the paths for: square stemmed Figwort - used by medieval herbalists, Wood Sorrel - much like Wood Anemone but with three lobed leaves and Greater Stitchwort. Speckled Wood butterflies can be found basking on the ground. Red Admiral, White Admiral, Peacock, Comma, Silver-washed fritillary and more feed on the Brambles and Buddleia in summer.

You may ask – Where are the birds? With woodland birds your greatest asset is to learn their calls and songs. The woodland is home to tits – Great & Blue are common, Coal, Marsh & Long-tailed Tits less so. Nuthatches, with their loud piping calls, can be seen climbing up and down the trees and the less conspicuous Treecreepers climb up one tree then fly to the base of another. Great-Spotted Woodpeckers with their loud drumming in spring and staccato '*tchick*' calls are common. Green Woodpeckers with their loud 'laugh' & Lesser Spotted with their softer drums and calls are scarce. Blackbird, Song & Mistle Thrush, Wren, Robin & Dunnock are common. Look for tiny Goldcrests - mainly on conifers. Chaffinches are common. Greenfinches and Goldfinches appear mainly on the Court Wood edges of the wood. Siskin in winter & Bullfinch are scarce. Sparrowhawk breeds and sightings of Buzzard overhead are becoming more frequent.

On migration anything can occur. Coppiced woodland, when mature, attracts warblers like Chiffchaff & Willow Warbler.

Newly cut plots allow sunlight to penetrate and warm the ground, and allow masses of wild flowers appear.

Foxes are very common. Roe Deer, Rabbits & very elusive Muntjac appear in the late evening and early morning. Squirrels abound and, with Jays, will be seen burying acorns in Autumn. Badgers are common but you have to be out very early to see a Badger on its way home to its sett. Moles, Rats, Mice, Voles & Shrews are rarely seen.

Fungi can appear anywhere in the wood. They can be found throughout the year but are more prolific in autumn. Look for bracket fungi on fallen and standing timber. In June look for the large, bright yellow 'Chicken of the Woods'.

Other Items of interest in Selsdon Wood

- **Herb Paris:** It is the FSW logo. April-June. Black berried. From the NW end of The Bridle Way walk up the hill looking through the fence into the wood. It may have 4, 5 or 6 leaves. **H** on the map.



- **Toothwort:** April-May. Pink, it has no green leaves and is parasitic on the roots of Hazels. From the **R./ G.** post at the S end of West Gorse walk E along East Gorse – just before it bends to the left look at the bottom of Hazels on your right. **T** on the map.



- **Addington Border ditch.** – Parallels Addington Border and crosses Court Wood Grove just NE of that path. It marks the old boundary between the Archbishop of Canterbury's Addington estate and Croydon. It can also be seen crossing Avis Grove & Broad Walk. Note the 1928 Borough Boundary marker in the ditch by Court Wood Grove. There are the remains of old field edges marked by flint ridges across Court Wood Grove and other paths.

- **Centenary Plantation:** An Oak plantation celebrating the Borough of Croydon's Centenary 1883 – 1983. It is the home of White & Broad-leaved Helleborines – related to Orchids.

- **Jubilee Plantation:** Oaks & Beeches planted by Croydon Girl Guides in 1977 to mark our Queen's Silver Jubilee. In 2012 Selsdon Girl Guides planted 60 trees to mark her Diamond Jubilee.

RED ROUTE:

RI. Follow the path up the hill, past the wooden

bear on your right. This part is steep but there is a seat at the entrance to the wood. Pyramidal Orchids appear on the right-hand side of the path in summer.

R2. Enter the wood. In spring the wood is alive with wildflowers, dainty white Wood Anemones are followed by a blanket of Bluebells, whose scent hangs heavy in the air. To the right of the path are a few small Spindle trees. These have small, quaint, green flowers in early summer followed by curious pink and orange berries. Spindle wood is hard and tough and was formerly used for making spindles, knitting needles and skewers.

You may notice a wooden plaque on a Pine tree set back on the left-hand side of the path - it marks the Maruje Dale Plantation. In 1979 a group of youngsters took part in a Youth Opportunities Scheme run by Croydon Parks Department. They learned coppicing, maintenance work and were taught to make benches and bird boxes with the wood. The name came from an anagram from the names of those that took part. Recently the Friends have removed foreign Sycamore to form open glades to encourage diversification.

R. Continue straight on at the cross track.

At the next fork bear left to emerge into another field.

R3. Follow the sign post across the meadow

towards Pool Grove. (If you divert along left of the field you may find Cowslips in spring and Pyramidal Orchids in summer.) The far side of the field is a mass of white Blackthorn in Spring and black sloes in Autumn. To your right as you approach Pool Grove is a single White Poplar. The bark is silvery grey with distinctive diamond shaped markings known as rhomboid lenticels. The small leaves are shiny on the upper side but covered with white felt on the underside so that they show white when in bud or when blown by the wind. From a distance the buds look like blossom but close inspection shows they are leaves. This tree mainly propagates by means of root suckers, which can spread to form colonies. To help these establish the Friends have protected them from deer with plastic guards.

R. Continue down Pool Grove to reach a clearing.

R4./ G7. Linden Glade (L on the map). Rest for a while on one of the benches. Listen to the bird song. The Friends are attempting to repair the old pond. A bird bath is on the top of the rock pile – please spare some water for the birds if you have any and perhaps make a wish! This is a good place to see butterflies in summer. 6 Small-leaved Lime trees form an arc - their flowers are attractive to insects. This is the best area to hear the female Tawny Owl's '*twick*' and the male's '*ho hooo*' after dark in early spring.

Here too there are Corsican Pines which drop cones in the autumn and a large female Holly bush which bears white flowers in the springtime and in autumn and winter is resplendent with red berries.

Red route continue right (Green route continue left) past the Memorial to Col. H.S. Wood and continue on to the T junction.

R./ G. Turn right along Farleigh Border. The large Holly tree has a superstitious past. It was bad luck to cut down and was also thought to ward off evil spirits. Roe Deer and Skylark may be seen in the farmer's field on your left. In winter flocks of Redwing & Fieldfare may appear here.

R5. At the junction turn right leaving the Green Route.

R. Ignore the minor path on your right.

R. As the path turns left - on your right is a large very old Wild Cherry tree which dominates the spot. The shiny flaky bark peels off in strips. See how many of its offspring you can spot.

(If you divert a little way to the right, into the field - on the left you can see 3 Oaks and a plaque that marks the 1986 50th Anniversary of Selsdon Wood becoming a National Trust reserve. Also there is a small stand of Alder trees - they have catkins in spring and small cone-like fruits develop in autumn. Return to the path.)

R./ G. Turn right at the T-junction rejoining the Green Route.

R6./ G. Continue straight on down the hill. Sweet Chestnuts can be seen. Introduced by the Romans, in Autumn the chestnuts litter the woodland floor. The nuts are housed in spiny husks and are edible but quite small. Look for a Sweet Chestnut tree with 3 stems, coppiced long ago.

R./ G. Walk on down to the car park.

GREEN ROUTE:

G1. Leave the car park at the far end, and walk along Vale Border, crossing two meadows, keeping the hedge on your left.

Look out for the Crab Apple tree in the hedge close to the car park. It has pretty pink and white blossom in the spring and in autumn the apples can be found littering the ground beneath. The dominant shrubs in this hedgerow are Blackthorn & Bullace, which are covered with white blossom in the early spring and bear black berries in the autumn. Dog Rose garlands the hedge in summer. There is a Turkey Oak in the hedgerow of Field 1. Note the Copper Beeches planted in the strip between Fields 2 & 3. Also the Horse Chestnut, Whitebeam and Lime in the corner of Field 3.

G2. Cut diagonally across the third field and enter the wood.

G. Follow Broad Walk and take the first right into Beech Grove.

(In April take a short diversion here, turning left instead of right, into Beech Grove, and after a few metres look around on your left for Early Purple orchids. Turn back and return to the route by going ahead at the cross track along Beech Grove.)

You will pass beneath the branches of two large Yew trees, which have wide, spreading branches that droop to the ground forming a tent. At the time of the Domesday Book a line of Yews was planted to mark the boundary between Croydon & the Archbishop of Canterbury's Addington estate - these are almost certainly descendants.

G3. Continue ahead at the cross track with Avis Grove. Turn right at the next cross track into Court Wood Grove. As you turn note the 5 large stems of a Sweet Chestnut coppiced long ago.

G4. Turn left at the next junction into Langfords Way.

(At the junction note the plot in front of you – it has been coppiced by the FSW. In Mediaeval times coppice was a major source of timber. It provided timber for pea sticks, bean poles, tree & fence stakes, firewood and charcoal making. It leaves taller 'Standard' trees and a profusion of wild flowers beneath. Hazel coppice regrows to provide a new crop in 7 or more years. The area is deer fenced to protect the new growth.)

G5. Turn right back into Beech Grove An Albino Squirrel is often seen around this junction. In Spring spot the spikes of white blossom on the Bird Cherry in the deer fenced section at this junction. As part of the Council regeneration programme 250 Hazels and 400 Oaks were planted in 2010. Deer fencing and tubes protect the young trees from deer browsing.

G. Turn right at the T-junction along Noakes Way.

G6. At the T-junction turn left into Leafy Grove.

G. Go straight across at the next cross track.

Shortly after, at the next cross track.

(Look on the left to see an area of Gorse - Gorse is also called Furze and Whin, it is usually found on heaths. In the 1800s the whole area between the Gorse paths was shown as *Broad Field* and later *The Gorses*. It is believed that Gorse was planted as a fuel for the lime kilns in Farley and gives the paths their present names. When the demand for Gorse dwindled, trees were planted or grew back. In the late 1960s a plot of Larch was part of the replanting plan. This in turn was felled in 2009, which has allowed hundreds of dormant Gorse seeds to spring up as you can see.)

G. Continue by turning right into West Gorse.

G7. See R4. until you reach G8.

G8./ R5. Leave the Red route by going straight on alongside the boundary fence. If you look through the fence in summer you may see a Roe Deer with fawns.

G. Turn right at the next junction into Greenhill Way. In summer Stock Doves hold territory here.

G./ R. Go straight on to rejoin the Red Route.

G./ R6. Continue straight on down the hill.

Sweet Chestnuts can be seen, introduced by the Romans.