

Preparing for hedge-laying...

Sunday November 25th was cool and damp though it didn't actually rain while the volunteers were at work. Seven keen people set to work clearing logs and brush from the trees Mark and I had felled the previous Wednesday. This was all done by mid morning so we commenced cutting hazel to make posts and ties for the hedge-laying we shall be doing in December. The posts need to be at least two inches thick and straight for about five feet while the ties need to be at least eight feet long and not more than about an inch thick. These were all trimmed of side shoots and laid into piles ready to be taken to the hedge we will lay next volunteer's day. This season's work area is beginning to look like it has been coppiced though not all the trees are down yet. The last trees can be felled any time between now and the end of February, while clearing up can be left until March or even later if need be.

Michael brought two hornbeam saplings which he planted in the coppice area. We wrapped them in plastic tape for want of any protectors against rabbit attack. The following day I was able to provide proper protection in the form of wire mesh.

On Friday 20th November Nick Hale took the trees he required for the lesser Teise project. The work is ongoing and Nick has timber being brought in from several woods in the area including Bedgebury Forest. Unfortunately the logistics of removing timber from Foal Hurst has proved more challenging than first anticipated because one of the gates is too narrow to permit large machinery in to the wood, so I don't know if we will be asked to supply more timber in the future.

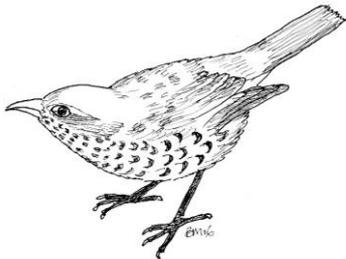
While October brought out lots of cap and stem fungi, November has displayed ball, club and other fungi. The first I noticed was my favourite, candle-snuff; this was followed by coral-spot, puffballs, jelly-ear, earth-fan, witch's butter and cramp balls.



Frogs were still active in the wood until the 15th but the cold spell during the following weekend 18th/19th saw them finally go into hibernation. At about this time, my bees decided it was too cold to fly. On the 27th I went to provide a little food for my hives, should they need it. It turned out that they did not. The first hive was so full of honey that even the air space above the top board, a space I try to keep clear for when I want to feed or give medication to my bees, was full of honey-filled comb.

FHW NEWS letter

The second hive only had a little comb in the air space but I could see the rest of the hive was jam packed with honey: Honey needs to be harvested by the middle of August because if the bees forage from ivy, which flowers in September, it makes the honey taste very unpleasant. I do not extract much honey as I believe it is better left for the bees to enjoy, especially as they put in so much work to make it and will be able to consume it all by March when new, spring flowers start to appear.



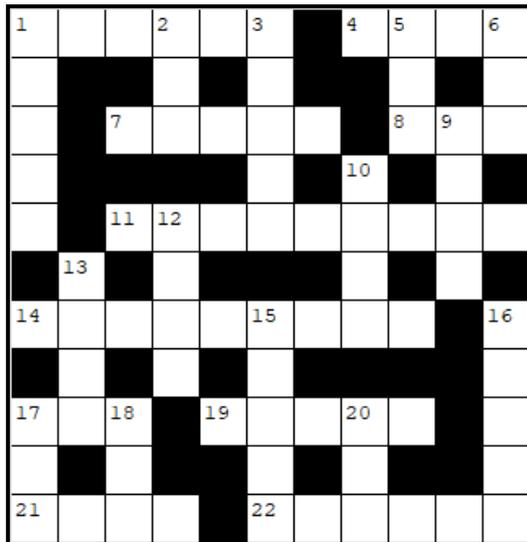
I saw my first fieldfare over the wood on the 26th when a flock of about one hundred descended on the orchard to the east of the wood. It is a great shame that much of this orchard will go when the new houses are built.

Our next volunteer's day will be Sunday December 30th so I look forward to seeing you in the Badsell Road car park at 09.30 for some much needed hedge-laying, when we can work off some of those Christmas excesses. Dress warmly with several layers as we will be working in the open.

It just remains for me to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Peter Prince

FHWCrossword No 139



Clues Across 1,2.Damage to new trees, (6,6). 4.and 21. Weather on 25th, (4 and 4) 7&19. Bee harvest, (5,5). 8. Cut timber, (3). 11. Reason for cutting hazel, (4,5). 14 Winter visitor to orchard, (9). 17.Small green veg, (3). 19. See 7. 21. See 4. 22. See 1.

Clues Down 1. Tree anchors,(5). 2. Prefix, 'connected with life and living things', (3). 3. Local river, (5). 5.Nocturnal bird, (3). 6. Carry, haul, (3). 9. Cereal crop, (4). 10. Type of frost, (4). 12. Capable, (4). 13. Yellow necked ? (4). 15. Plants of a particular region, (5). 16. Group of 14 across, (5) 17. Seed case, (3). 18. Intention, (3). 20. Nocturnal mammal, (3).

Solutions to FHW Crossword No 138

Across 6. Hibernation. 7. Glut. 8. Haw. 9. Drake. 11. Yeti. 14. Pond. 16. Ropes. 17. UFO. 18. Lull. 20. Green Elfcup.

Down 1.Bill. 2. Belt. 3. Wax Cap. 4. Lichen. 5. Know. 9. Dipping. 12. Erodes. 13. To. 15. Fungi. 18. Life. 19. Lout.

Any News?

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