



LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

NEWSletter

Issue No 180

December 2019

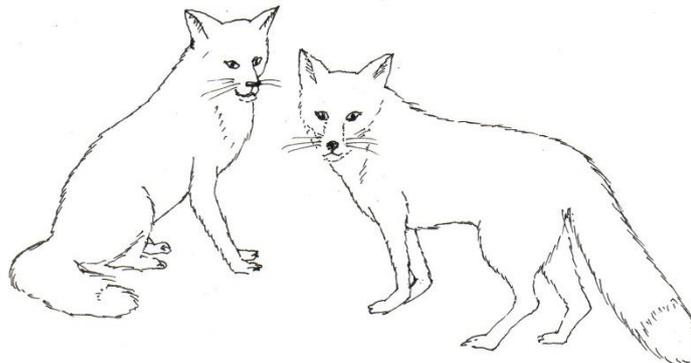
Mud and trees...

After all the rain we had in November it was to be expected that our work area in Foal Hurst would be muddy. It was a pleasant mild day but cloudy for the most part. Eight volunteers walked into the wood at 09.30 on the 24th and while Ray with his chainsaw continued felling trees in the area we coppiced last month, the rest of us started work on the second coppice.

The area where Ray was working is mainly silver birch and large oaks while the second area is mainly poplar and hazel with some small birch trees, this makes a big difference to what we have to clear. In the first area there was a lot of bramble and ferns with some holly particularly small holly saplings of only a year or two. In the second area where the hazel is growing there was more honeysuckle and fallen dead wood to move. Where the hazel was thinner there is some bramble but more ferns and other groundcover, both areas are heavily rutted from when the wood was felled in 1980 and there are a number of rabbit burrows, which are a constant hazard wherever you venture in Foal Hurst wood.

Some large trees had already been felled in the new area so Terry and Rebecca cleared the logs and filled in the ruts. The rest of us cleared dead wood and honeysuckle and took down the smaller poplars. Together we have finished three quarters of the intended space. We left the hazel for next month as the long thin whips need to be fresh for laying the hedge along the Orchard Meadow in January.

Terry found a fox skeleton including the skull with most of the teeth, spine, pelvis, scapular (shoulder bone) and bones from one forelimb. It is intended that this will be kept to go in the visitor centre when it is built. This is interesting as there was an active fox hole in the coppice we worked last month but this has since been abandoned. There is though, a new fox hole in the new area and I expect this too will be abandoned now we have moved in. The poor foxes will be feeling chased around the wood now they have to look for a third site for their home.



FHW NEWS *letter*

Talking of homes, on the 6th November the electricity company started to re-route the cables hanging over the Mascalls Farm development but left a quantity of wood and brush in the gravelly stream. When I phoned Berkeley Homes on the 14th they were very amenable about having the ditch cleared, and it was finished the next day. Berkeley Homes also started laying the road system which will serve the housing development.

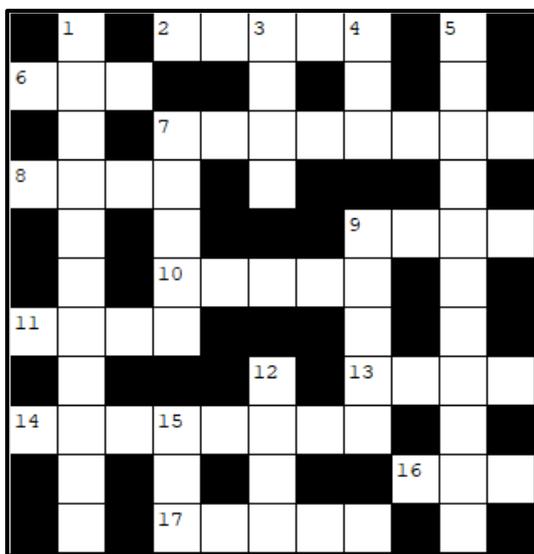
On the 13th while working in the wood I saw a shrew running for cover under a tree stump, it is easy to distinguish a shrew from a mouse or vole as they have long noses compared with the other two. I also saw a kestrel on the electric wires and he did not seem shy of me, perhaps he was too engrossed in hunting and didn't notice my approach.

Have a Wonderful Solstice and a very Merry Christmas!

The next volunteer's day is on Sunday 29th Dec. at 9.30., a good opportunity to work off the Christmas excesses. See you then in the Badsell Road car park, bring your family and friends.

Peter Prince

FHW Crossword No 147



Clues Across 2. 'Sap suckers', (5). 6 & 3 down. Reynard's den,(3,4). 6 & 14. Anatomical find in FHW, (3,8). 7. Useful tool for Volunteers, (8). 8. Mythical creature, (4).9. Female relative, (4).. 10. Funny, (5).. 11. Painful!! (4). 13. Underground 'Anchor', (4). 14. See 6. 16. *Taxus*, (3). 17. Plant growth similar to Lichen, (5).

Clues Down 1. Scented climber, (11). 3. See 6 Across. 4. Musical note, (3). 5. Brambles, ferns, small saplings etc., (11). 7. *Betula*, (5). 9. Fruit of the Oak, (5). 12. Male Deer, (4). 15. Meadow, (3).

Solutions to FHW Crossword No 146

Across 1. Sod. 7. Sparrowhawk. 8. Ire. 9. Upon, 11. Bee. 13. Ism. 14. Finch. 17. Rut. 18. Coo. 19. Rain. 22. Aim. 24. Wheelbarrow. 25. Ken.

Down 1. Spider. 2. Oar. 3. Drey. 4. Bole. 5 Thrush. 6. Skint. 10. PM. 12. Fit. 13. Icy. 14. Funnel. 15. Common. 16. Crows. 17. Hi. 20. Cobs. 21. Bark.23. Ire.

Any News?

Items for the next Issue by 1st January please, to:-

80 Forest Road, Paddock Wood,
Kent TN12 6JX
email b.mace452@btinternet.com