



LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

NEWSletter

Issue No 182

February 2020

Hedging one's bets...

So, one twelfth of the year is passed and on the 26th January we had our first volunteers' day of the new decade. It was an excellent start as thirteen people assembled to do hedge-laying, and though the weather was grey at the beginning, the sun made a bold effort to join us later.

A warm welcome to Anne who came for the first time.

Due to the recent, very wet weather there had not been the same preparation of stakes and bindings as last year, so Ray used his chainsaw to put points on the new stakes.

Before work started the hedge was a massive tangle of stems and branches, it was difficult to know where to start, what to cut and what to leave. However, with guidance from Paul Jenks who is our long term hedge-laying expert we set to, each taking a section of hedge to clear ready for laying. The aim is to cut away all the side shoots and branches and leave a single, strong, straight stem which is then bent over and supported by the posts

The hedge was planted in 2008 and some of the stems were as thick as trees making them difficult to trim but after ninety minutes there was clear evidence of where we had been and some of the hedge was ready for laying. Paul and Simon started the first section and after the break Paul carried on with Mark and Alexander. The hedge we are working on is long and thick and will probably take three or four years to complete but many hands make light work and I think everyone enjoyed the morning.

Over the past month I have seen the local fox three times, the deer twice and heard the tawny owl on several occasions at night. Of course with all the wet, the animals can't help but leave their foot prints in the mud which is another good way of telling what is in the wood at the moment.

Someone was asking why a certain oak tree had been ring barked in the wood. This particular tree was one of two in that area which were not in good health, they were very one-sided and one of them is too close to two other trees which will be able to grow better without the third.

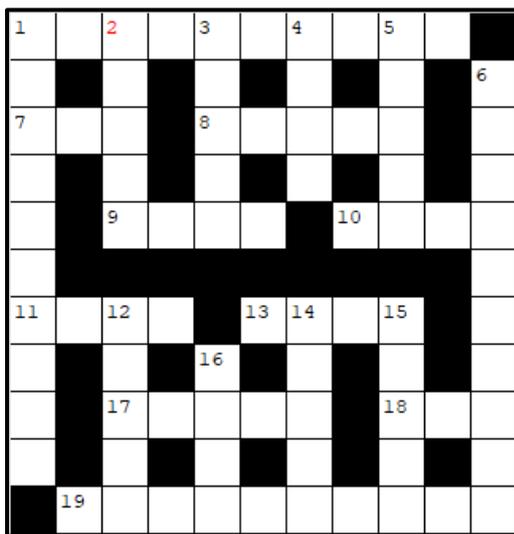


Ring barking trees is a good and easy way to kill a tree without having the difficulty of felling it with a chainsaw and having to clear the logs and brush which are created in the process, especially in dense woodland. If a silver birch is ringed it will fall within two years. In the case of poplar the process takes four to six years but with an oak it takes six to eight years for the tree to die and then it can continue standing as a dead snag for a further thirty years. As a result, the tree becomes a wonderful home for all sorts of insects and fungi and by association insect-eating birds such as woodpeckers and tree creepers. In years to come both types of bird may make their homes in the trunk and so it is not just a supply of food but also shelter for nesting and breeding.

Through the last part of January I heard the woodpecker drumming on trees as they declare their territory ready for mating. Likewise I have heard the fox barking for a mate. There was an interesting article in the Town Crier about foxes.

The next volunteers' day is on **Sunday 23rd Feb. at 9.30**. We will be hedge laying along the path to the south of the Orchard Meadow again so bring good gloves and I suggest you dress warmly as it may be cold and it is exposed. See you then in the Badsell Road car park,

FHW Crossword No 149



Clues Across

1. Heard in the wood, (3,7). 7. Tawny, Barn?, (3)
8. Sea eagles, (5). 9. Light fog, (4). 10. Is not, abrv. (3'1)
11. Measurement, 13. Shortened limb, (4).
17. Minute creature that forms reefs, (5). 18. Chose, decide, (3). 19. Fate of old oak tree, (4,6)

Clues Down

1. Tell tale marks in the mud, (4,6)
2. Moves water and feed through trees, (5). 3. Maples, (5)
4. S.E county, (4). 5. Avian residences, (5). 6. Grown, Nurtured, (10). 12. Succulent plants with spikes, (5).
14. Lime genus, (5). 15. Badger, (5). 16. Amphibian, (4).

Solutions to FHW Crossword No 148

- Across** 1,8 & 3 down. 4. Data. 7. Deadhead. 10. Churr. 13. Perch. 16. Yew. 17. Aconites. 19. Yard. 20. Muddy.
- Down** 1. Hazel. 2. Pod. 3. Year. 5. Avenue. 6. Adders. 9. Ash. 10. Cub. 11. Apiary. 12. Arbour. 13. Berry. 15. Stem. 18. Sod.

Any News?

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

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