



LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

NEWSletter

Issue No 183

March 2020

Acting out the hippopotamus song...

Sunday the 23rd February was windy and cloudy but the predicted rain did not materialise. Instead, ten people ended up playing in several inches of cold, wet mud along Allotments Way, as we continued hedge laying. Again we split into groups with some people knocking in posts, some cutting stems and some laying the hedge. Others supplied prepared stakes and bindings to where they were needed and all told we managed to complete another good length of hedge and it looks really good. It is the aim of the Wednesday team, who now work on a Thursday morning, to complete this half of the hedge over the following couple of weeks. The second half of the hedge will be finished next winter.

Once the bindings and stakes were all in place three people went into the coppice area and finished clearing the last of the felled trees there. The Council Estates Team, between the 4th and 6th of February, finished cutting the coppice areas we started in October. On Thursday, the 20th, Mark and I had almost completed the clearing up but rain stopped play. We spent as much time filling in vehicle ruts with logs as making log piles. We also planted six small oak trees and four holly trees in the coppice areas, and used the brush from the tops of the trees as protection against the rabbits and deer. Over the next couple of years the brush will rot down leaving the trees to grow, and by then the trees shouldn't be disturbed by the deer as they will have become accustomed to the trees' presence.

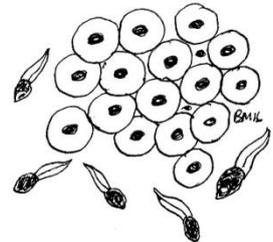
Towards the end of January and into the beginning of Feb. two herons were taking a keen interest in the small pond in the Orchard Meadow. I saw them there on several occasions. By Jan. 30th the hawthorn was showing signs of coming into leaf and the blackthorn was looking to blossom. The bluebells were beginning to show above the ground where we have been coppicing and all the catkins on the hazel had dropped. By the time our Feb. work day came round much of the blackthorn was in bloom and the hawthorn was in leaf



During the February storms a number of large trees came down particularly in the south-west corner of the wood where we will be coppicing next season. I have only had to clear a few small trees from the paths. However, the storms dumped so much water, the ditches became blocked with leaves and deadfall. Several small culverts became blocked making the flow of water divert over the paths and the Wetland path became almost impassable in two places. I cleared the culverts throughout the wood on the 13th and again on the 17th.

It is impressive how quickly the water flows once the blockage is removed. If the weather is going to continue producing stronger wetter storms in winter there may be a need for larger pipes in the culverts in the future

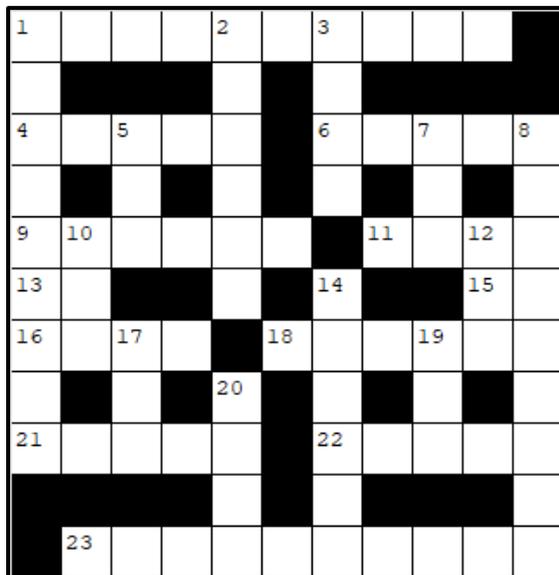
Though there had been no evidence of them the previous Thursday, by the 23rd of Feb. the frogs and toads were beginning to assemble for their annual mate and several clumps of frogspawn were floating in the small pond in Orchard Meadow. I will give you a fuller report on this next time.



The next volunteer's day is on **Sunday 29th March. at 9.30.** We will be creating a new hibernaculum so there will be digging and carrying of logs. Also, don't forget that the clocks change on the 29th so we will be **one hour earlier!!!**

Peter Prince.

FHW Crossword No 150



Clues Across 1. About to flower end Jan, (10).
4. Unnerve, (5). 6. Evidence, (5). 9. Meles meles, (6). 11. Resound, (4). 13. For example, (1,1)
15. Ditto, (1,1). 16. Inland expanse of water, (4).
18. 2 on the small pond. (6). 21. Type of grass, (5).
22. Leg bone, (5). 23. Tree top brush,(10).

Clues Down 1. Hyacinthoides non – scripta, (9).
2. Young cat, (6). 3. Fruits of the Rose, (4).
5. Piece of turf, (3). 7. Fictional goblin, (3).
8. Clumps of amphibian eggs, (9). 10. Range style cooker , (3). 12. Domestic fowl, (3). 14. Frantic, manic, (6). 17. Young goat, (3).19. Sphere, (3).
20. Amphibian, (4).

Solutions to FHW Crossword No 149

Across 1. Fox barking. 7. Owl. 8. Ernes. 9. Mist.
10. Isn't. 11. Inch. 13. Stub. 17. Coral. 18. Opt.
19. Ring barked.

Down 1. Foot prints. 2. Xylem. 3. Acers. 4. Kent.
5. Nests. 6. Cultivated. 12. Cacti. 14. Tilia.
15. Badge.r 16. Frog.

Any News?

Items for the next Issue by 4th April please , to:-

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