

Volunteers helped by Covid 19!

On Sunday September 27th, fourteen volunteers gathered together, suitably distanced, in the Foal Hurst Wood car park. Welcome to Brian, Lynda, Samuel and Emily who came for the first time and we hope to see them again next time.

It was a grey and windy day but we all knuckled down and managed to accomplish a good deal of work.

In one respect, Covid did us a favour in that fourteen people is too many to have in one coppice area. I was forced to find alternative work in case there were more than six volunteers. As a result four teams were created, team 1 was Ray with his chain-saw. Team 2 had six strong and healthy workers for coppicing. The remaining 7 people were divided between teams 3 and 4 and covered preparation work for laying the rest of the hedge we commenced laying last season. Thus we managed to maintain distances and keep to the rule of six.

Previously Ray, Mark, Michael and I had been in the coppice area once a week from Sept 1st, working to clear some of the fallen debris and establish dead-hedges for the site. There were quite a lot of logs and brush left from when Ray was last there and this was cleared by team 2 while Ray cut down more trees in a different location.



What we are coppicing is mainly ash and hazel interspersed with birch and poplar. There are a few oaks and a very nice alder coppice which has ten or so healthy stems. We are trying to fell the tall trees but leave the hazel where possible so they can be cut fresh in December ready for making stakes and bindings for the hedge laying. On top of this, there were several windfall oaks which are still rotting away after the storm of 87 which also had to be cleared. It is unfortunate that most of the ash has dieback. I wanted to save some specimens because they are fine trees but the dieback means they will all have to be dropped. The council has been notified and said it is fine to leave the ash lying in log piles to rot down over the next ten + years. I was afraid we might have to burn them, which would have been very nice on a cold winter Volunteers' day but a nightmare to control without a good water supply to douse any flying sparks.

On the hedging front, the two teams set to work removing all the plastic anti-rabbit protectors that were wrapped around the stems of the plants when they were planted back in 2008. This involved removing the lower limbs of the shrubs so we could crawl into the hedge to remove the plastics.

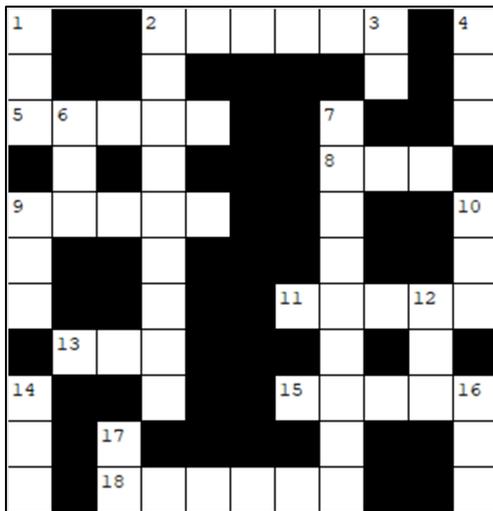
Many of the protectors were brittle and shattered as we removed them, the bits then having to be picked up and bagged. We collected four large refuse bags of protectors. After the plastics were removed we set to pruning out the side shoots and branches ready for the laying of the hedge later this winter. All-together, all four teams made good progress and a substantial dent in this autumn's tasks.



During September Michael planted some ox-eye daisies in the Orchard Meadow and two oak seedlings in the old orchard between the reserve and the building site. The next work day will be Sunday October 25th. We will meet again in the Badsell Road car park at 09.30 and apportion the work according to the numbers. The plan is to continue the same work at both locations in the reserve and hopefully everything will go as well as it did this time. I look forward to seeing you all then. Remember to wear good strong footwear, and plenty of layers to protect against rain and cold and to bring your own drink and snacks.

Peter Prince.

FHW Crossword No 153



Clues Across 2. See 18 Across. 5. Coppiced trees (5).
8. Tawny ? (3). 9. Meadow, (5). 11. See 13 Across.
13, 11, Stacks of Ash, (3, 5) .15. *Betula pendula*, (5).
18, 2. Fire hazards, (6,6)

Clues Down 1. *Fraxinus excelsior*, (3). 2, see 14..
3. Therefore, (2). 4., 14. Ancient tree, (3,3).
6. French friend, (3). 7. Main volunteer activity, (9).
9. *Vulpes vulpes*, (3). 10. Affirmative, (3).
12. 'and the rest'. (3). 14, 2. Planted by Michael, (3,9).
16. Fruit of the rose, (3). 17. Conjunction, 'maybe' (2).

Solutions to FHW Crossword No 152

Across 1. Sim. 7. Meadow Brown. 9. Lush.
11. Stags. 14. Owlet. 16. Farm. 21. Lepidoptera.
23. Due.

Down 1. Small. 2. I.E. 3. Masks. 4. Two. 5. Young.
6. Gnat. 8. Ate. 10. UFO. 12. Sir. 13. Bee. 15. White.
17. Aphid. 18. Mouse. 19. Cubs. 20. Ark. 22. EU...

Any News ?

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

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