



LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

NEWSletter

Issue No 194

November 2021

All Hallows Eve...

It is very unfortunate that Ray has actually broken his hand from the fall he had during the last volunteer's day. This was not discovered for a couple of weeks and he still has his hand in plaster at this time. As a result he was unable to volunteer for the October work day and will be out of action throughout November. Ray, we all wish you a full and speedy recovery. Since the last volunteers' day, Simone, Mark and I have continued with the coppicing throughout October. On the morning of Sunday October 31st after a good lie in, we all prepared to work in the nature reserve and then didn't go. The devil was in the clouds and the rain made a spirited attempt at making the ground very wet and the outdoors generally unpleasant. However, the intention was to have the volunteer's day on November 7th instead.

Sixteen people turned up on the 7th and the work progressed well. In light of Ray's incapacity, Steve Shughurst volunteered to chainsaw while the rest of us worked elsewhere.

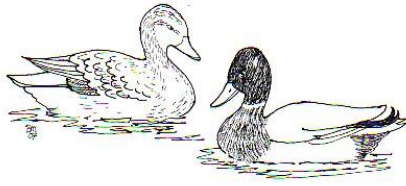
Several new people came including some from the U3A Climate Change Group. Welcome to Ashby, Sue, Anne, Claire, Lyn and Arnold. The last person packed up at 13.00 and at the end of the session it was easy to see where we had been. Many hands and light work come to mind.

While many of the thinner trees and much of the fallen ground cover has now been cleared, there is still the problem of felling the bigger trees which require the use of a chainsaw. I am hoping to have help in this department from the Paddock Wood Council Estates Team who have helped in the past.

The flower meadow was cut again to even out the grass length and a new plastic and metal bench has been placed at the dipping pond.

Mark and I had a meeting with David Sargison, from Paddock Wood Town Council, about planting trees in the wood for the 'Queen's Green Canopy' initiative and we are awaiting confirmation from the council. If all goes well, it is probable we will be able to plant some fifty plus trees around the perimeter of the Orchard Meadow. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is offering, for free, about 750 trees of various sorts if anyone wants to acquire a tree for planting. These can be planted on your own land or on public land with agreement from the council. I am hoping the council will also take monetary donations for other trees if anyone wishes to go down this road. All trees planted will have to be cared for by the person or persons who plant them, including watering them every week through the summer. The trees will be planted either early this coming spring or next autumn, as it is likely the summer will be too hot for planting and make the quantity of water required to keep them alive too great.

I have about thirty oak trees for planting in the current coppice area when we have finished chopping down the birch and poplar. I would eventually like to plant a hedge along the boundary between our nature reserve and the Berkeley's construction site.

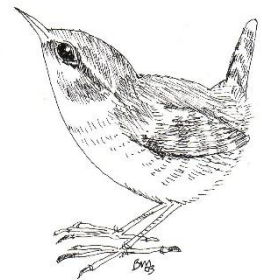


Ducks seem to have taken up residence on the most northerly of the three new holding ponds in the old orchard by the reserve. Whether they will stay is yet to be seen but perhaps this could become a good natural habitat for wildlife if it is not too disturbed in the future. However one thing I have noticed is that the ditch between the reserve and the old orchard now seems to run muddy after every downpour, whereas it used to run clear

when the orchard trees were still there. The mud carried downstream will settle out somewhere and may be the cause of more flooding. It will certainly mean someone else having to clear ditches downstream in the future.

Talking of ditches, I took a contractor around the reserve to assess the various bridges for estimates with a view to replacing them over the next few years. Some of them, though not weak in any way, are showing holes which could be dangerous to the unwary walker. It is hoped that two or three will be replaced each year until they are all renewed.

This month's 'How to' topic is **Dead Hedging**. This is a simple task which enables us to make the tree top brush neat and tidy and allows the brush to rot down slowly so the carbon is released over a longer period of time than it would if it was rotting on the ground. This is because the brush is kept off the ground and can dry up slowing the process during the summer. Dead hedges also make lovely highways for small rodents moving around the wood and also nesting sites for small birds such as wrens.



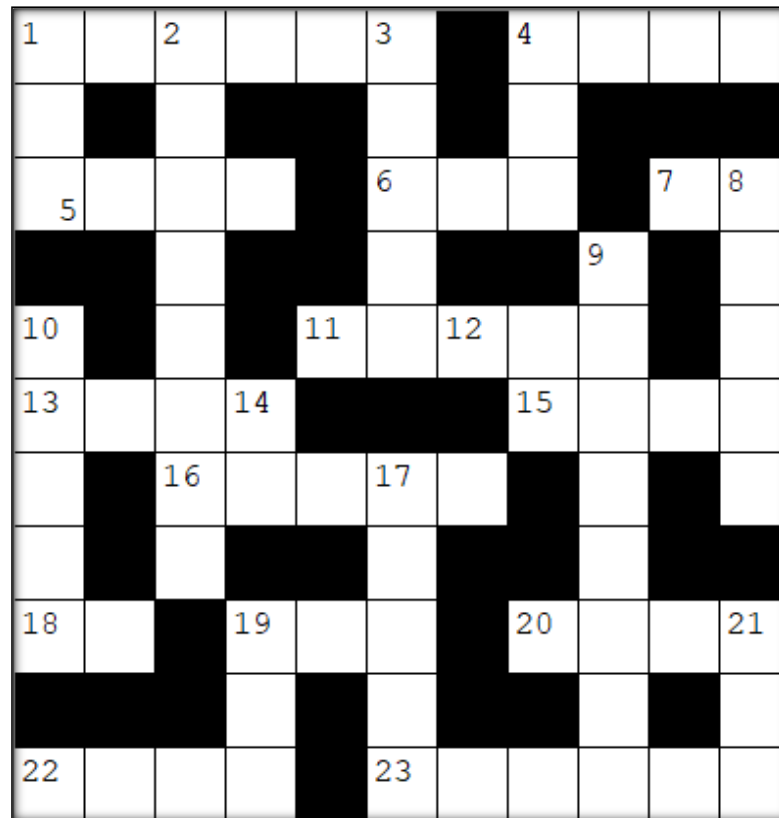
The first thing is to work out the line the hedge should take. I tend to set them around the perimeter of where we are working, and then through the work area as required. However there is no reason why you shouldn't make concentric circles or a maze from your dead hedge. It is important to leave gaps in the hedge and not to bridge any ditches if they cross the line of construction.

To start with, lay logs, lengths of brush or thinner boughs along the hedge line, logs should only be placed at the bottom of the hedge as they make the hedge unstable if they are high up. The brush can be built up, laid flat, to about half a metre/18 inches and as wide as you can reach. Above this height, the new material should be stuck downwards into the hedge to hold it all together. Each new piece should be laid against the previous one $\backslash\backslash\backslash\backslash\backslash\backslash\backslash\backslash\backslash\rightarrow$ along the hedge line. When you reach the far end of the hedge come back inserting the brush the other way $\leftarrow\text{//}\text{//}\text{//}\text{//}\text{//}$. Once the hedge is about a metre/three feet high the brush should be pushed in, in a similar fashion along the hedge but also at an angle across the hedge. As you work your way along the hedge and back down the other side you will be creating an 'A' form with the sticks. This is to create stability preventing the hedge from toppling as it decays. It is best if the diagonal sticks are long enough for the end to reach the ground but it is not essential that they should do so. Finally, when the hedge has reached shoulder height trim off any protruding sticks which may cause injury to man or beast that walks along its length. There, job done.

Our next Volunteers' day will be Sunday 28th November, we will continue the coppicing and hopefully you will all want to return so we have a nice large group again. Start time will be 09.30 in the Badsell Road car park, weather permitting. See you then..

Peter Prince

FHW Crossword No 159



Clues Across 1,15. Result of activity on 7th, (6,4) 4.1.4. Spick & Span, (4,3,4). 5. Wagon, (4).
6.19.15. Tree disease, (3,3,4).7. Personal data, (1,1). 11. Secret hoard, (5).13. Precipitation, (4).
15. See 1.16. Compass point, (5).18. Greeting, (2). 19. See 6.20 & 9 down. What Steve Songhurst did, (4,8). 22. See 4. 23. Brief 13, (6).

Clues Down 1. Conjunction, (3). 2. Billboard, (8). 3 17, Coastal Redwoods, (5,5). 4. Japanese drama, (3). 9. Cutting tool, (8). 10. FHW hedge material, (5).12. Social media term, (1,1).
14. Negative, (2).1 7. See 3. 19. 24 Hours, (3). 21. City transport system, (1,1,1)

Solutions to FHW Crossword No 158

Across

1. Meadow. 4. Pond. 7. Dead. 3. Wally. 8. Elfish. 11. OR.
12. Toads. 16. Hedge. 18. Ha. 20. Floral. 23. Pair.
24. Path. 25. Severe

Down

1. Mud bath. 2. Azalea. 3. Wally. 5. Oats. 6. Day.9. Ire.
10. Hog. 12. Reserve. 14. Oaf. 15. Duo. 17. Damage.
19. Males. 21. Last. 22. Lop.

Any News?

Items for the next Issue by
5th December please to:-

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