



LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

NEWSletter

Issue No 196

January 2022

A Solstice and a New Year...

Happy New Year

Because of Christmas and Boxing Day being on the last weekend of December the Volunteers' day was split into two. Work was carried out on the 19th December (close to the solstice) and then again on the 2nd January. As usual, with a little help from other people including the PW estates team, I continued working on Wednesdays through the month and by the 19th there was a large quantity of felled trees needing to be cleared up. Most of the trees had been logged already but some were still in one piece, just having been dropped and left.

Six people turned up on the 19th and we managed to clear about three quarters of what was waiting for us. It was a misty day, cold and damp but the work was warming. We had some good conversations and at the end we all had a feeling of accomplishment.

Then, on the 2nd January only four people braved the pleasantly warm but mostly overcast day.

We enjoyed our surroundings; it was quiet, peaceful and somewhat relaxing with the birds singing all around. Ray and Simone prepared the stakes and bindings for when we start hedge laying, while Steve and I finished clearing the last of the felled trees. I found the time passed very quickly but all the work was completed, so that marks the end of this season's coppicing. Next time we will be hedge laying in the Orchard Meadow.

On Saturday 11th December I went round blowing the leaves off the paths again.

FHW NEWS *letter*

On my way along the newly laid hedge on Allotments Way I saw a redwing and a nuthatch. I don't often see either of these birds even though I believe they are resident all year round. The redwing is another of the thrush-like birds as is the winter visiting fieldfare which we used to see in large flocks all around the reserve. However they are easily distinguishable from each other as the redwing has an eye stripe like the nuthatch while the fieldfare has a dove grey head distinguishing it from other thrush like birds. The redwing also has a distinctive red underside to its wings which is not always obvious when at rest but is very clear in flight. Also the redwing has a short tail while the fieldfare's is much longer.



Meles meles

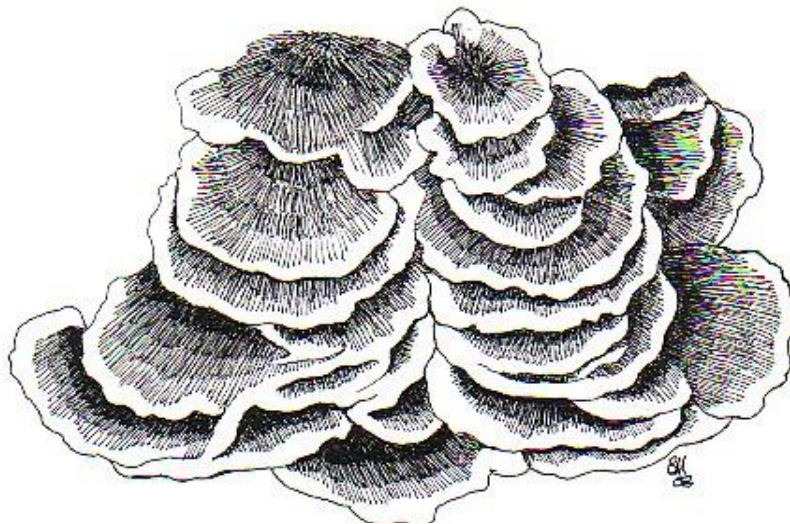
On the 15th December I noticed a new excavation on the north edge of our work area which looks to be a badger set. There are definitely badgers in Brick Kiln Wood in the Berkeley Homes nature reserve so it is only a short hop for them to make their way into our reserve. I wish them luck and hope we have not disturbed them too much with our activities. It would be a shame if they feel they have to move on after all the work of digging a new home.

FHW NEWS *letter*

On the 16th the 20 whips from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council were received by P.W.T.C. I took possession of them on the 17th and Simone and I planted them on the 18th. I bought 20 canes as supports but relied on the old rabbit guards removed from previous plantings. I ran out of canes because there were actually 25 whips of hazel, hornbeam, hawthorn and field maple. They are planted along the boundary between the reserve and Berkeley Homes. There is room for lots more whips along that edge and I would like to make a new hedge between the two plots.

If anyone wants to donate a tree for the Queen's Jubilee there is plenty of room but the tree must be a British native species and be suitable for heavy clay soil. The best time to plant will be early this spring or next autumn. There is only one stipulation and that is that you must keep the plant watered through the summer. A couple of litres per week should be enough unless it becomes really hot. Unfortunately I do not have enough time to go round and water everything that might be planted. I already have some 35 trees I am planting myself, all of which will have to be watered throughout the summer.

The past month had been really good for fungi with some lovely displays on logs and fallen trees. In particular, I have seen lots of turkeytail and similar fan-shaped brackets. I am hoping the spring will be good for the soft fungi like jelly ear and witches butter.

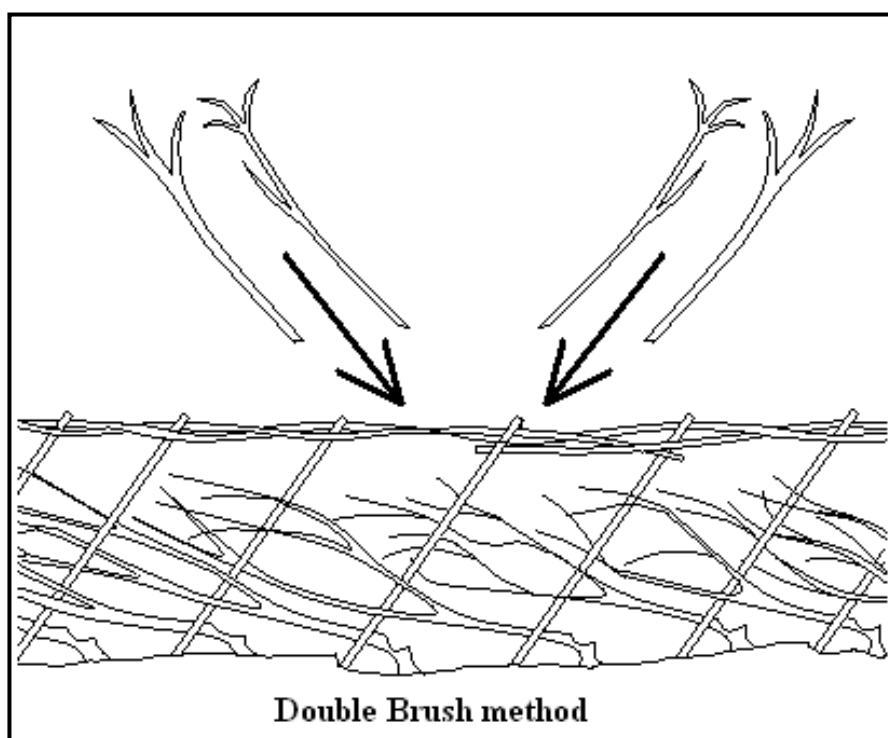


Trametes versicolor

Turkey Tail fungus

FHW NEWS *letter*

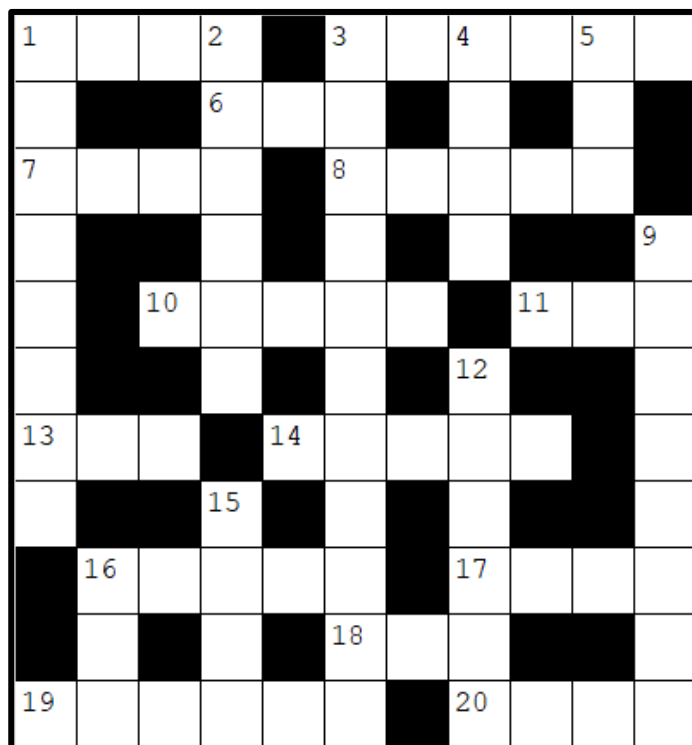
Next time we will be laying the other side of the hedge which we laid over the last two years. We are going to use a different method called Double Brush hedging because this will make disposing of the cut stems easier. The basic preparation of cutting all the side shoots is the same as is the half cutting of the main stems and the bending over of the remaining stem and winding through the stakes. The difference comes in the fact that the stakes are driven into the ground at an angle along the hedge. This method means the brush we cut off in the first place can be reinserted in to the hedge as a dead-hedge which saves us having to carry it to another location to rot down. If you look through newsletter 189 you will find the 'How to' for normal hedge laying.



The next volunteers' day will be on Sunday, January 30th when we will be trimming the hedge and hopefully will commence laying the eastern end, working westwards. So come all who may, the more the merrier. See you all in the Badsell Road car park at 09.30. Dress warmly in layers, as it can be very cold on the north side of that hedge.

Peter Prince.

FHW Crossword No 161



Clues Across 1. Natural organic growing medium. (4). 3. Heavy rain, (6). 6., Rumpus, (3). 7. Flower, (4). 8. Flower cluster, (5). 10. Bird song, (5). 11. Cow's call, (3). 13. Crow's call, (3). 14. Preposition, regarding, (5). 16. Non-native rodent, (5). 17. Form of limestone (4). 18. Winter sport equipment, (3). 19. Limb of tree, (5). 20. A form of 1 across, (4).

Clues Down 1. 21st of June or December, (8). 2. Cold weather clothing, (6). 3. Hedge laying system, (6,5). 4. Part of the ear, (4). 5. Jelly, (3). 9. Limit, edge, (8). 12. Rural, (5). 15. Blue colour, (4). 16. Dog, crossbreed, aggressive, (3).

Solutions to FHW Crossword No 160

Across 1. Cub. 6. Arboretum. 7. Mug. 8. Dingo. 10. GP. 12. Tern. 14. Scan. 16. CV. 17. Flock. 19. Axe. 21. Hammering. 22. Eos.

Down 1. Climate. 2. Badger. 3. Woodpeckers 4. Stag. 5. Imp. 11. Insects. 13. Neo. 15. Change. 18. Lamb. 20. Why.

Any News?

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

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