



LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

# NEWSletter

Issue No 198

March 2022

## The Moon and Venus join the Volunteers (and they never even noticed)...

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> of February was a bright and sunny day, not a cloud in sight though the wind was cold. At six thirty a.m. the moon joined Venus and they both shone brightly until the sun came up. It's good that they keep each other company sometimes.

The volunteers' day was a big success with eleven people turning up for work. Of the eleven, Ray cut spikes on the stakes, three people laid the hedge, another three filled in what had already been finished last time, with the cut brush forming the Double Brush hedge we were aiming for, and the rest of the group started trimming the eastern hedge in the car park. The end result is that another sixty to eighty feet of hedge has been laid, the first section of hedge which we laid last time is now complete (and it looks very good indeed), plus we have started on the next volunteer day's tasks which means we shouldn't have to work so hard next time.



Double Brush Hedging before and after completion

# FHW NEWS *letter*

On the second of Feb I went into the wood to cut more stakes and bindings. It was a lovely sunny day and the bluebells were just beginning to show green above ground. They are so prolific in some areas it is difficult to walk without treading on them. I just hope they all recover from my tramlings. While I was there, the birdsong was quite beautiful as they all declared territory and seemed to be preparing for nesting.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> Feb I planted in this season's coppice area, 17 oak trees that I have raised from 2020's acorns. None of them are more than a few inches tall but if even four survive it will be good for the area. There was a heron at the small pond in the Orchard Meadow.

The two storms of the week ending 19<sup>th</sup> brought down several trees, four of these were significant including, on the western edge of the wood, an old oak which had a girth of about a metre and was one of the oldest trees we have. It is a real shame. In its falling it brought down a second oak next to it. They both snapped off where they were rotten and bound to fall soon, whatever the weather.

Of the other two significant falls one was a Scots Pine near to the Wetland. This is a shame as we only have a few Scots Pines. The other was an oak of about 70 years, to the south of The Avenue. Another smaller tree fell across the path at the rookery and a Poplar fell in the south east corner of the wood. Lastly, one of the trees along the Gravelly Stream in the Flower Meadow has been left half uprooted and leaning heavily. This is quite a devastating outcome but at least it is not as bad as the '87 storm.



Lesser Celandine

On a brighter note I found several blackthorn in blossom in the hedges we laid two years ago along the edges of the Orchard Meadow. Blackthorn is a life saver for insects that come out of hibernation early and for honey bees. Celandine and primroses are also showing signs of flowering.

Something I found quite amusing yet disgraceful was the fact that the tall oast-like building on the Berkeley Homes plot lost the upper part of its roof during the storms. It says a lot for the quality of build and the use of modern techniques. I noticed the old oust just to the west did not lose its roof and its wind funnel was still rotating merrily.

On Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup>, after the storms were over, we made a start on laying the next section of hedge. It was a sunny morning though it was a bit windy and the temperature didn't reach double figures. Ray cut more spikes on the stakes we were using. He has purchased a new electric chainsaw which seems to do the job quite well. (You should see the length of the extension cable!) [Early April Fool Joke.] It is quieter and obviously greener than the older petrol version. Well done Ray. We also removed a large part of the wire from the fence between the two rows of shrubs along the hedge at Orchard Meadow.



# FHW NEWS *letter*

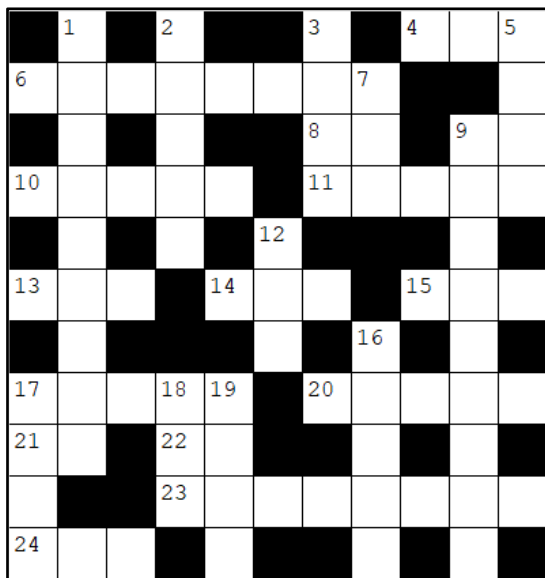
I went to see if there were any frogs in the Dipping Pond yet, but nothing moved. However a lady I spoke to said there were frogs moving around in some of the ponds in the wood. There was a skylark singing in the Orchard Meadow which was very pleasing. I did see a pair of smooth newts in the dipping pond on the 27<sup>th</sup> Feb. On March 1<sup>st</sup> there were 11 male frogs wriggling around the Wetland and several dozen male frogs in the small pond in the Orchard Meadow where they were calling quite loudly even when I came close to them. They are obviously on the move so I will keep an eye out for frog and toad spawn.

It turns out that just two hours after we finished our work on the 27<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Richard Barsley went in to the Orchard meadow and planted a fifth tree to fill in the last hole I dug back in January. Thank you very much for this kind donation from Barsley's department store.

Next volunteers' day will be on March 27<sup>th</sup> and will be the last one of the season. Don't forget that summer time begins so we will all have to get up an hour earlier!!! It's also Mothering Sunday. We will be trimming hedges and possibly finishing work at laying the hedge. See you then at 09.30 ready and willing and cheery faced. Spring is almost here!

*Peter Prince*

## FHW Crossword No 163



**Clues Across** 4. Ulmus, (3). 6,23. It's 'green' with sharp teeth, (8.8). 8. Negative, (2). 9. Computer enhanced view of the world, (1.1). 10. Efts, (5). 11. Foe, (5). 13. Morning moisture, (3). 14. Conifer. (3). 15. Question, (3). 17. Plant life of a region, (5). 20. Edible plants, medicinal? (5). 21. Cartographers, (1.1). 22. Electrical term, (1.1). 23. See 1 Down. 24. Take off branch, limb, (3).

**Clues Down** 1. Hyacinthoides non-scripta, (9). 2,3. Pinus sylvestris, (5.4) 5. Muddy, swampy, (4). 7. Trick, (3). 9. Creature of land and water, (9). 12. Small songbird, (3). 16. Plants without flowers or seed, (5). 17. Young horse, (4). 18. Motoring organisation, (1.1.1). 24. Pain, (4).

### Solutions to FHW Crossword No 162

**Across** 1. Jibe. 3. Cranes. 8. Buzzards. 9. Cur. 11. Overzealous. 13. Zoo. 18. Flitting. 20. Storks. 21. Gene.

**Down** 1. Jabs. 2. Buzz. 4. Ride. 6. Spores. 9. Coo. 10. Cep. 11. Ouzels. 12. Ego. 14. Flak. 15. E.T.A. 16. Wire. 17. Ogre. 19. Go.

### Any News?

Items for the next Issue by 4<sup>th</sup> April please to:-

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