



LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

# NEWSletter

Issue No 199

April 2022

## **A quarter of the year has passed already... Doesn't time fly!**

Spring has sprung, the equinox has passed and the clocks have changed to summer time.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> March 10 people gathered at 09.30 to brave what turned out to be a cool and cloudy day. After a week of sunshine it was quite a surprise but we dug our heels in and finished the cutting of the car park hedge and then, finally, we stuffed all the trimmings in the Orchard Meadow into the newly laid hedge. The work was complete by 12.15 and everyone went home feeling very satisfied with their accomplishments and ready to celebrate Mother's Day.

I have to say I am very happy and most grateful to all the volunteers who have shown up this season and put so much effort into the work. I know that none of the tasks are easy, all requiring a good deal of physical effort, so, thank you to everyone for your continued dedication.

I shall also take this opportunity to say thank you to Brian and his son for producing the newsletter each month. Also, thank you Mark and Allison for the continued flow of tea, coffee and biscuits which is a most vital part of the day's events.

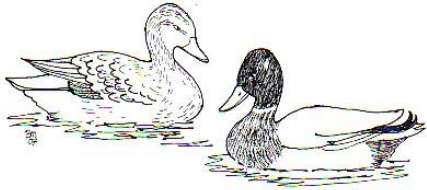
On the 1<sup>st</sup> March I was just in time to see the first accumulations of frogs in the Orchard Meadow small pond and the Wetland, and include them in the last newsletter. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> March there were 224 clumps of frog spawn in the Small Orchard Meadow Pond. Two of these were white spawn.

In the Wetland there were several male frogs wriggling but no spawn yet and I also found male frogs in the Rookery Pond and in the Dipping Pond. The Dipping pond also had 19 male toads, 5 female toads and 2 pairs of mating toads. There were also several smooth newts who seemed to be gathering for the feast.



On the 7<sup>th</sup> March there were lots of toads and frogs. In the Wetland there were 12 male frogs and at least 25 couples. In the Dipping Pond there were 18 male frogs, 16 couples, 12 male toads, 11 couples. At both locations it was difficult to make a count because they all paddled to the bottom of the pond as I approached, so the couples are estimated according to the number of spawn clumps or strands. There was a pair of mallard ducks on the rookery pond, and this time they didn't fly away. I also planted my last ten oak trees. Four I placed around the big tree that came down on the western edge and the rest I planted in the coppice area. Next time I will not plant in pots and grow them on but plant them directly into the ground where I want them. It will save a lot of TLC and I won't have to tramp around the wood with heavy pots looking for places to put them and digging huge holes. It sounds so much easier.

# FHW NEWS letter



On the 9<sup>th</sup> March, Ray, Steve, John and I all worked on laying the hedge and cutting more stakes. I have to say this is probably my favourite job in the reserve. There were more frogs and toads active in the Wetland and Dipping pond, and the two mallards were still on the Rookery Pond. So everything was looking promising.

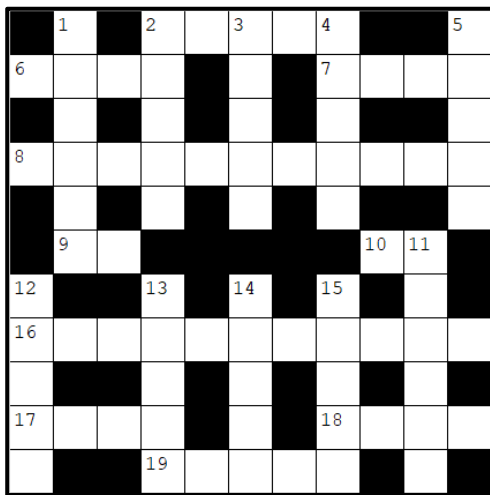
On the 10<sup>th</sup> there were 11 clumps of frog spawn in the pond in the south-west corner, 21 clumps at the Rookery, 106 clumps in the Dipping Pond and 73 clumps of frog spawn in the Wetland which increased to 114 clumps by the 12<sup>th</sup>. There were also 21 strands of toad spawn in the Dipping Pond. By the 13<sup>th</sup> the activity had finished. The mallards moved to the ditch by the entrance to the wood.

Worrying news. On a number of occasions dog walkers have apparently been entering the wood from the Berkeley Homes estate and walking through onto the neighbouring farmland where the horses are. I have asked the council to talk to Berkeley Homes about this infringement. It is evident we are going to need a substantial fence between the two properties.

I said before that March was going to be the last volunteers' day of the season, but I shall now be holding another volunteers' day on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April to help move a load of wood chips from the car park to various places on the paths around the wood, to try and reduce the mud effect during next winter. So I look forward to seeing you at 09.30 in the car park.

*Peter Prince*

## FHW Crossword No164



**Clues Across** 2. Amphibian eggs, (5). 6. Portent, (4). 7. Asian Myth, (4). 8. 21 clumps frog spawn here, (7,4). 9. Greeting, (2). 10. Exclamation, (2). 16. 5 in the Dipping Pond on 1<sup>st</sup> March, (6,5) 17. Sea Eagle, (4). 18. Biblical garden, (4). 19. Homes for birds (5)

**Clues Down** 1. & 14. 'Several gathering for the feast', (6,5). 2. Reptile, (5). 3. Tree seed, (5). 4. Immature form of insect, (5). 5. Avian creatures, (5). 11. Natural boundaries, (6). 12. Preposition, following, (5). 13. Large Corvus, (5). 14. See 1. 15. 'Peaceful' birds, (5).

### Solutions to FHW Crossword No 163

**Across** 4. Elm. 6. Electric. 8.No. 9.AR. 10. Newts. 11. Enemy. 13.Dew. 14. Fir. 15. Why. 17. Flora. 20.Herbs . 21.OS. 22. AC.23. Chainsaw. 24. Lop.  
**Down** 1. Bluebells. 2.Scots. 3. Pine. 5. Miry. 9. Amphibian. 12. Tit. 16. Ferns. 17. Foal. 18. RAC. 19. Ache.

## Any News?

Items for the next Issue by 1<sup>st</sup> May please to:-

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