



LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

NEWSletter

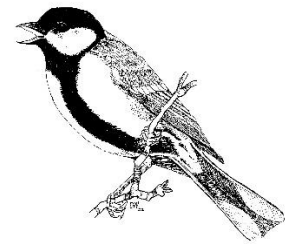
Issue No 207

April 2023

Hedge clipping before the birds nest...

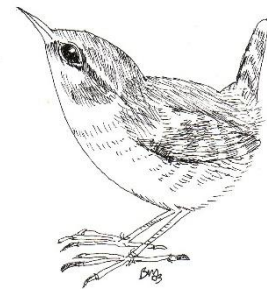
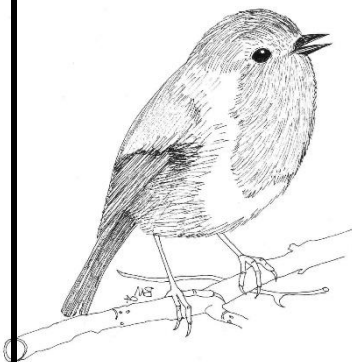


So, March started cold and wet. Members of the Wednesday team braved the conditions on March 1st in order to continue stuffing the brush back into the hedge along the Orchard Meadow. As we worked there were robins, great tits and wrens flitting around and a buzzard flew briefly overhead. We packed up at twelve to look for warmer climes. There was no additional spawn



in any of the ponds but there was a cock pheasant close to the dipping pond. I had also seen him in that area on several previous occasions. It was nice to see some of the blackthorn blossom in full bloom even if it was only one or two of the more protected trees.

On the 8th it snowed so we didn't work, I went up on the 10th to check for frogs and toads because in the town, the 9th had been quite good for both. Nothing, although the ponds were full to brimming again after the snow had melted, and all the ditches were flowing well. However, I did see a flock of five goldfinches in the reserve, a flock of seven long tailed tits, plus several robins, wrens, blue tits and great tits. There was also a short time when the buzzards were trying to catch pigeons. They started by diving on the perching pigeons and when the pigeons did eventually take to the air the two buzzards swooped in to try and catch them. They were unsuccessful.



FHW NEWS *letter*

On the 15th Steve and I were back at the grindstone finishing the hedge. We would have done more but a lot of time was spent talking, particularly about frogs and toads. There were 208 clumps of frog spawn in the small pond in the Orchard Meadow and there were at least twelve toads in the dipping pond. Seven were seen and five others were noted from their calls. I have been told that there was lots of activity in the dipping pond on the 13th which was just after the the night when lots of toads were found on the roads close to Putlands' ponds. However, I could see no evidence of toad spawn. There was no new activity in the Wetland or at the Rookery. On the 15th there was a cat hunting in the Orchard Meadow.

More trees have been planted by the estates team, for Queen Elizabeth's Green Canopy initiative. These were mainly positioned around the edge of the Orchard Meadow but there will soon be other trees to go into the wood itself.

On the 22nd Ray, Steve and I braved the drizzle to try and finish laying the hedge and almost finish packing it with everything we had taken out in the preparation for laying. I also completed another survey of the ponds and found 73 new clumps of frog spawn in the Dipping Pond. There is very little evidence of toads this year but that may just be because I have not been there when they were there. It is also very difficult to spot toad spawn in the dark waters of Foal Hurst's wet areas because unlike frog spawn it does not float, and it is made of long thin strands so it blends in amongst the weeds at the bottom of the ponds.

Just to confuse everyone, we had the Equinox followed by a clock change. In spite of all that, eight people still came to brave the drizzle and the mud on Sunday 26th March. The task was cutting hedges, starting with the west side of the car park hedge. This was a hard cut which was completed by quarter to eleven. From there we trimmed the south side of the allotments hedge but the top had already been done so it was a simple job. Finally, we started on the hedge along the south side of Orchard Meadow of which we managed about a quarter. Again, this was a hard cut. We packed up at about twelve-fifteen bringing the season to a close. I am going to continue to monitor the hedges because from a fruiting point of view, it may actually work out better for the wildlife if they are cut every three years as opposed to every other year.



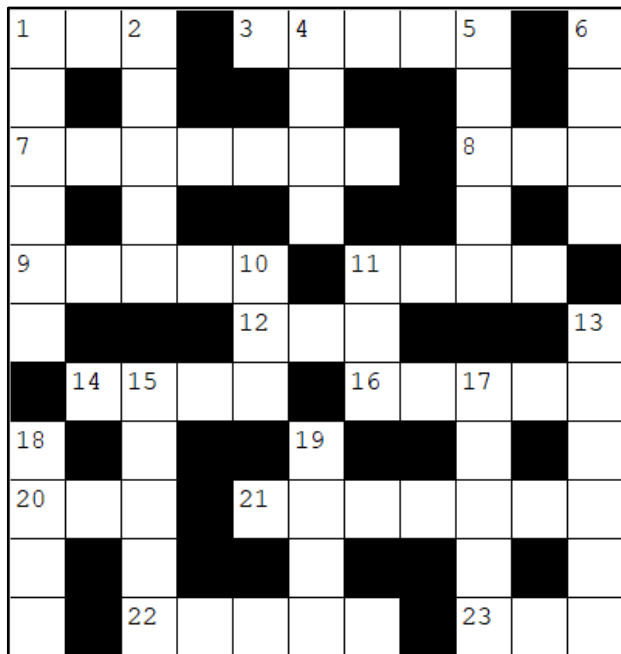


Don't forget to enjoy the bluebells in May and I hope you enjoy the rest of the wood throughout the summer. The next official work day will of course be in September but there is always the option of joining the Wednesday group if you are desperate to lose some weight or just want some exercise.

Thank you to everyone who has come to put in time and effort in the reserve. I would also like to thank Alison and Mark for the provision of tea, coffee and biscuits. Special thanks go to Brian Mace and his family for their continued compilation of the newsletter. I hope you all have a marvellous summer and I look forward to seeing you later in the year.

Peter Prince

FHW Crossword No 172



Clues Across

1. Pouch, (3) 3. Eggs of amphibians, (5)
 7 & 4 Down. Where seven toads were seen, (7,4)
 8. Sharp humour, (3). 9. Pitchers, jugs, (5).
 11. Shrub, small tree, (4). 12. Employ, (3).
 14. Large water bird, (4). 16. Fairy like, (5).
 20. Chopping tool, (3). 21. Genus Columba, (7).
 22. Number of toads seen in 7 Across, (6).
 23 Blood relations, (3)

Clues Down

1. Grass like plants, (6). 2. Small wood, (5).
 4. See 7 Across. Small salamanders, (5).
 6. Nocturnal flyers, (4). 10. Earths' closest star, (3).
 11. Super pollinator, (3). 13. Consensus, (6).
 15. *Troglodytes troglodytes* (5).
 17. Group of birds, (5), 18 .Outer layer of tree, (4).
 19. Number of toads noted from their calls, (4)

Solutions to FHW Crossword No171

Across 1.Frogs. 4. Wire. 7. Eft. 8.Adder. 10. Woe.
 11. Era.12.Foal. 13. Peck. 6. Row. 18. Emu.
 21. Owner. 22. Air. 23.Adze. 24. Toads.

Down

1.Fielfares. 2. Oats.3. Spawn. 4. Wader. 5. Rare.
 6. Blackbird. Do. 14. Fence. 15. Hurst. 17. Wood.
 19. Me. 20. Data.

This is the last Issue for the current season

Please forward any news or items of interest to
 80 Forest Road Paddock Wood TN12 6JX
 email b.mace452@btinternet.com