



LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

NEWSletter

Issue No 212

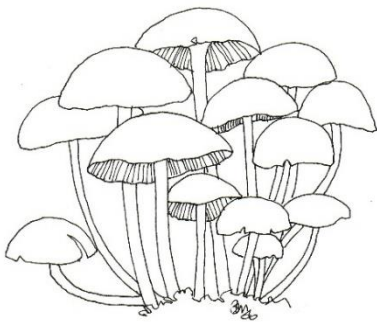
November 2023

Frustrating Rain and Another Fine Mess I Got You Into (Stanley).

After the October work day Simone and I finished the clearing up on the sunny 31st which took us about an hour and it was much easier to see how far we had coppiced. Then October finished with rain and storms and November came in with more of the same. We didn't work on November 1st because it was so wet. I worked for a while on Tuesday 7th but rain stopped play on Wednesday the 8th. As an alternative Steve and I went in on Friday the 10th, rain stopped play again at about 11.30, so frustrating. Wednesday 15th saw another attempt to fell trees and it actually stayed dry. On the 22nd Ray, Steve and I had our final incursion to prepare an extensive mess for the volunteer's day but were hindered by numerous hung trees so did not manage as much as we would have liked.

I met a man who came all the way from Sittingbourne to wander the woods. He said he was a keen twitcher and had seen a willow tit at the entrance to the wood! I have never seen a willow tit but apparently they are almost identical to Marsh tits, perhaps a little more stocky in the body. They are very similar to black caps in colour but of course the black cap is quite a bit bigger and most fly south for the winter so it is unlikely to be seen in November. However, some do stay and I have seen them in the reserve before in November, many years ago, and with the warm autumn there may be more of them wintering over now.

I am very sad to say that someone has seen fit to throw the metal bench into the dipping pond along with many of the tree signs from the orchard. They also vandalised some of the remaining path signs and a couple of other benches I am afraid. This kind of behaviour makes me want to close the wood completely. Sometimes I wonder why we bother until I remember that most visitors are interested and considerate. One other thing was awry and that was that the juniper I planted last winter disappeared, but I think I may have to blame the deer for that.



Sulphur Tuft

However, the first frost hit just before the middle of November. On the 15th I sat in the Flower meadow for ten minutes and watched a kestrel hovering, swooping and climbing to start the next hover. It was a beautiful scene as the wind blew the leaves from the trees like golden confetti wafting across the field. There were still red admirals flitting through the wood at this time but the sure sign of autumn having finally arrived was the abundance of fungi around. I think sulphur tuft was the most prolific to start with but it was soon joined by honey fungus, turkey tail, candle snuff, jelly ear, birch polypore, various waxcaps, brittlegills, milkcaps and inkcaps. There was a very bright purple fungus growing as tiny beads on one stump and one of the logs had lots of domed creamy brackets no bigger than a few millimetres across. I still haven't found either of these two in my almanac.

Caught on a coral reef.

There is another fungus which is not in my almanac, *arto-mysis pyxi-datus* sometimes known as the candelabra fungus or crown tip mushroom. Last year in the October newsletter, issue 201, I mentioned finding Upright Coral (*Romaria stricta*) which many of our volunteers had an opportunity to see on the 25th September work day (I included a photo in the newsletter). I chose *Romaria* because the specimen I saw was growing on wood and most coral fungi grow in leaf litter or soil. Well there has been a development. South-East News reported on the evening of the 16th November a finding of *arto-mysis pyxi-datus* which is very rare, there being only a dozen recorded sightings in Britain. It is so similar to *Romaria stricta* that I wondered if I had made a mistake. I pointed out in the newsletter that the *Romaria* starts out pink and bleached quickly to creamy white. I never did see it in its pink stage and now wonder if it could have been *arto-mysis* which starts creamy white and darkens slightly over time but crucially grows on rotting wood not soil! Simone and I studied our photos and compared them with the frozen picture on the TV and decided to send our pictures to Kent Wildlife Trust. I soon had a short e-mail back saying both were wrong and our specimen was in fact White Coral *Clavulina cristata*. So, sorry, we are not going down in the history books as having something really rare. Perhaps next time.

So the volunteers' day arrived and 10 brave folk battled the frost (not quite the snow as promised) to go cavorting in the reserve. I had once again left several trees felled but not logged and cleared, and the group quickly set to filling ruts with logs and building more dead hedges. So, thank you to everyone who turned up because everything was cleared by lunch and we all went home early(ish) to clean up ready for the switch on of the Christmas lights.

I found a crust fungus growing on a log. It was white and in an oval shape about 75mm by 50mm with ribs and ripples radiating out from the centre. I think it was very pretty but could not find it in my books to identify clearly. There are several crust fungi which all seem to have different Latin names so cannot be grouped in any way. There are also several woodland moulds which can sometimes look like crust fungi. It's all so baffling.

Next Volunteers' day will be on **Sunday 7th January 2024** in the car park by 09.30 when hopefully we will complete the coppice. If there is anyone who would rather work on December 31st please let me know and I can bring the tools and join you if all is well.

So that just leaves me to wish you all a very

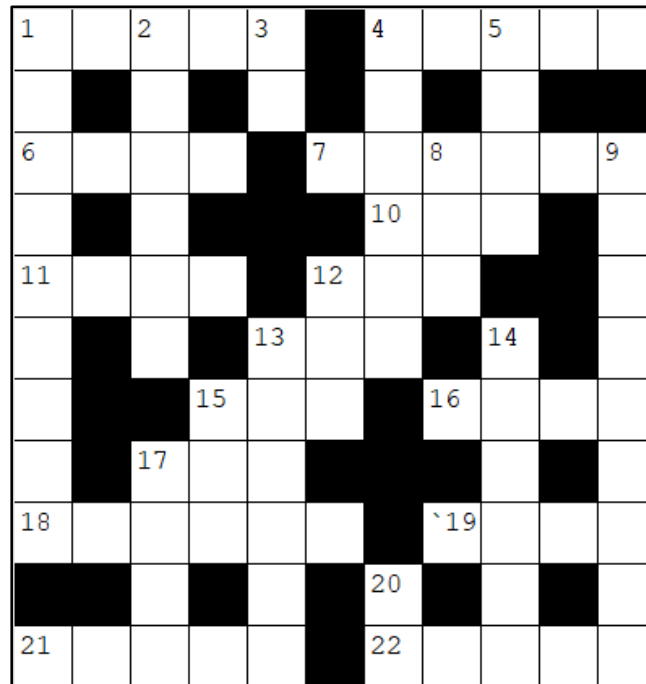
Merry Christmas

and a

Happy and Prosperous New Year

Peter Prince

FHW CROSSWORD No 176



Clues Across 1&22. Error of identity, (5,5). 4. See 21. 6. Den, hideaway, (4).
 7. Spiders trap, (6).10. Small bed, (3). 11. Strigiofor.mes, (4). 12. The heavens, (3)
 13. Public transport, (3). 15. Plant fluid, (3). 16. Soon, presently, (4). 17. Name for a
 8 Down, maybe, (3). 18. Main stems of trees, (6). 19. Elegance, (4).
 21 & 4. Corticioid, (5,5). 22. See 1Across.

Clues Down 1. Rare visitor to FHW, (6,3). 2. Tapering frozen water, (6). 3. Like this, (1,1).
 4. Groups of birds etc, (6). 5. Small salamander, (4). 8. Young man, (3). 9. Relating to
 Plants, (9). 12. Drink by sips, (3). 13. Wickerwork container, (6). 14. Flower part, (6).
 15. Earth's star, (3). 17. Mentor, (4). 20. Top lawyer, (1,1).

Solutions to FHW Crossword No 175

Across 1. Wet and. 4. Leaf. 6. Era. 7. Dell. 8. RA.
 10. Hedge. 11. Yo. 12. Nut. 14. Marsh. 15. Pollinator.
 18. If. 20. Aphid. 22. Or. 23. Wing. 24. LNR. 25. Late.
 26. Morass.

Down 1. Weary. 2. Alpha. 3. Dead. 4. Laden. 5. Fall.
 9. AONB. . Trio. 16. Eagle. 17. Smell. 18. Frogs.
 19. AWOL 21. Harm.

Any News?

Items for the next Issue by 14th January, please to:-

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