

Working Party 10th May 2025

One a beautiful Spring day we arrived to find just Liz at 10 o'clock, however we were rapidly joined by John and Anne and then by Stuart and Julie, who had planned to just come for the walk and was so enjoying the Wood she stayed to help which was wonderful.

The main job this time was pulling out as many of the thousands of young sycamore seedlings as we could and we certainly pulled out thousands



Over the last few years the dry Summers and windy Winters have meant we have lost several mature trees, mainly from the top of the old wood where the ground is driest. This means that more light is getting to the forest floor and is allowing the sycamore seeds to germinate. They need at least 6 hours per day of bright light in order to germinate, which is a mechanism which prevents them from germinating where they will not be able to survive. However we do not want more sycamore in the forest as these are not native and although they do provide a habitat for birds and can be used by birds such as blackbirds, robins and blue tits for nesting and the seeds can be eaten by birds such as greenfinches and goldfinches they do not provide anything like the rich biodiversity of an oak tree in this country, which support more life than any other UK tree, with 2,300 species supported by oak trees and 326 species which depend upon oak trees for survival.



In pulling up the sycamore seedlings we found several small oaks, wild cherry trees, horse chestnut and ash trees which now have more room to grow and develop hopefully to fill the spaces in the

forest canopy once more. We have planted several oak trees throughout the old wood, and do find that unless they are fairly small they do usually die in the dry conditions- so it appears we will have to be patient as the smaller trees are growing slowly and less are dying so this seems to be the way forward.

Once our backs were aching Liz, John and Anne went home and Stuart, Katherine and Stephen stayed behind to saw up and stack a holly tree that had fallen over in the Winter as an oak branch fell on it. I would ask people not to climb on our fallen trees and wood piles as they can be unsafe as they move unpredictably and potentially trap legs etc. We cannot always get to recently fallen branches immediately although we do try to clear all paths as soon as we hear of a fallen branch.

Katherine Hutchinson