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Essex
Wildlife Trust

Uttlesford Local Group

February 2024

The main purpose of the Uttlesford Local Group is to run weekday work parties on Tuesday and Thursday mornings between 9:30 and 12 noon at the nine nature reserves in our district, moving around them as the seasonal work requires.

This Winter we have been working in our woodlands at West Wood and Shadwell Wood doing the annual coppicing, and here is a photo of some of the members of the group taken at West Wood in a rare moment when they were not working; well we do need to take a tea break. Thank you (from left to right) Mike, Steve, Chris, Dave, Peter, David, Robert, and Robert, Tim and Will. And thank you to the others in the team who could not join us on that day.





We are trying a traditional technique for increasing the trees in the wood by 'layering'. This works well on Hazel, as shown above, where a flexible shoot is bent over and pegged to the ground, or weighed down with a log. The tip of the shoot should root and make another tree. In traditional managed coppice woods the Hazels were often spaced quite closely at about 8 to 10 feet, and this was because they were layers from a nearby tree. The close spacing also makes the new shoots grow straight up making them more useful as a crop. In this part of West Wood we are working under the canopy of Oaks, and the shade which they cast would probably prevent young planted Hazels from growing, but we hope that with the support of the parent Hazel tree the layers will establish better.





An early sign of spring on February 15th in Shadwell Wood are the first leaves of Oxlips pushing up from underground. They will begin to flower in early April and be over by early May, several weeks earlier than we used to believe possible due to warmer climate.

Newsletter Editor and photos by ; Tony Morton, Chair, Uttlesford Local Group



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