



Friends of Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common

NEWSLETTER

Issue 26 Free to members, non members 25p

WINTER 2006

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

The past year

I'm not going to tell you about all the things that have happened in the past year, as you will have read about them in the newsletters already.

I would just like to pick out a few.

Thanks to a generous grant to FOLK, from the Cotswolds Conservation Board's Sustainable Development Fund and a contribution from CBC, interpretation boards and leaflets have been produced with a map to explain the importance of the geology, unimproved limestone grassland, animals and history of Leckhampton Hill Local Nature Reserve.

The boards have been placed in Tramway Cottage Car Park, in Brownstone Quarry Car Park and next to the Cotswold Way above Salterley Quarry.

Leaflets have already been distributed to the Tourist Office and schools. Members will have received their copy sent out with the last newsletter.

The FOLK Executive Committee has been pleased to welcome Wayne Sedgwick – Cheltenham Borough Council's new Community Parks Officer (a replacement for James Blockley) who you have already met this evening. Wayne has lived in Cheltenham for some



Captured at play on the Hill

time, knows the site well and has been working for CBC in the Community Ranger Team, so has been able to get up to speed quickly.

We were very sorry to lose James and we would all like to thank him for all his extremely hard work on behalf of the Hill.

The whole site, including Daisybank Field, has now been designated a Local Nature Reserve and we hope to organise an event to celebrate this next summer with the help of Gloucestershire Geo-conservation Trust and CBC. Natural England (previously English Nature) hopes to provide some signs.

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The best news – At a recent Leckhampton Hill Consultative Group site visit and meeting – The Natural England representative Paul Hackman said that he is pleased with the effect that the cattle grazing is having. This does not mean that the SSSI grassland is in favourable or even recovering condition – but does mean that it is moving in the right direction.. The Committee would particularly like to thank Jenny Phelps, the AONB Grasslands Officer and Anne, John-Paul and Annette North - the graziers, for all their hard work.

The coming year

Before the end of 2006 CBC will be putting in an application for a grant to the SITA Trust for funding towards a Project Officer for the site for 3 years. This is money made available through the government landfill tax to be used for environmental purposes. The Project Officer would be employed by CBC and be responsible for the implementation of the Management Plan. Including such things as habitat management, species recording and monitoring, and coordination of historical and geological conservation. If the grant application is successful the Project Officer could be in post by early summer next year.

Following much discussion it is hoped that a 5-year grazing agreement between CBC and the grazier will be in place soon. This will allow the grazier longer-term security as the herd numbers have been built up specifically to graze the site well enough up to the standard that Natural England require.

To help the grazing regime CBC are looking into providing further land off the SSSI where the herd can be given supplementary feeding during the winter months if necessary.

In general CBC are taking FOLK more seriously and have formally appointed 2

councillors to attend Executive Committee meetings. Councillor Surgeon and Councillor Nicholson. The Committee welcome their involvement but we are keen to maintain FOLK's independence.

A family walk has been organised with the Cotswolds Conservation Board for Tuesday 20th February 2007 starting at Brownstone Quarry Car Park at 10.30 entitled "Take the little devils to the chimney." It will include a tour of the grassland, industrial archaeology and the Hill Fort and Barrow. We hope you will come and bring your friends.

CBC are proposing "New laws about dogs in Cheltenham."

ORDER 1

Requiring an owner to clear up when a dog has fouled everywhere in Cheltenham Borough.

ORDER 2.

Keeping dogs on leads in some places.

ORDER 3.

Keeping dogs on leads when directed.

ORDER 4.

Excluding dogs from some land.

Our site is partly in and partly out of Cheltenham Borough so these orders would apply to Daisybank Field, Daisybank Road and Charlton Kings Common but not to Leckhampton Hill, which is in Tewkesbury District Council.

Following discussion at an Executive Committee meeting it was decided that the Committee would comment on the orders as follows:

ORDER 1. Requiring owners to clear up when a dog has fouled

and

ORDER 2. Keeping dogs on leads in some places for example footpaths.

That these Orders would be inappropriate for Charlton Kings Common and Daisybank Field and should be specifically excluded from these orders.

ORDER 3. Keeping dogs on leads when directed.

This should only apply when a particular dog is causing a nuisance and should stay in the order.

and

ORDER 4. Excluding dogs from some land (for example play areas, cemeteries and lakes) is not relevant to this site.

The Consultation Period is open until 10 November 2006.

If you wish to reply individually you may do so by post or on line and I have some

leaflets with reply sections attached, if you see me later.

Conservation Working Parties take place on the second Thursday and the fourth Sunday of each month, meeting at Tramway Cottage Car Park at 9.30 for about 3 hours. Everyone is welcome to come and do as much as they can manage. Where possible Tony Clifford gets as close as he can with his camper van to brew a fresh cup of tea for us all at half time.

You may not feel able to join the Working Parties yourself but another way of helping would be to encourage friends, neighbours or anyone you meet while out walking on the Hill to become a member of FOLK too.

And finally: I would like to thank the FOLK Committee for all their help and hard work during my first year as Chairman.

Particular thanks should go to Vic Ellis who has come to the end of his 3 years as Secretary and thank you also to the Membership for all your support.

All Welcome

TAKE THE LITTLE DEVILS TO THE CHIMNEY

Half -Term

Tuesday February 20th 10.30 am

**Guided family walk led by F.O.L.K. around
Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common.**

Starting at Brownstone Quarry Car Park

Map Reference SO951178

Approx 2 hrs - 2 miles.

"THE COTSWOLDS – Why They Are an A.O.N.B."

At the F.O.L.K. AGM on November 1st we were privileged to hear Guest Speaker and Cotswold Volunteer Warden John Heathcott give a fascinating illustrated talk on "Why the Cotswolds are designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty".

John is an excellent speaker and the audience enjoyed a wealth of information on the historical and geographical development of the Cotswolds from the Iron Age through to the present day. We learned of the original localised area which was called "Cott's Weald", meaning "The woodland of a man called Codd or Cott". Gradually the woodland was cleared for agriculture and sheep-rearing and the whole downland slopes immediately east of the Jurassic Limestone escarpment from Bath northeastwards became the Cotswolds. We were also treated to a delightful set of John's slides which showed not the only great variety of landscape and wildlife habitat, but also the richness of the historical architecture from the cottage to castle.

In every way the talk was most enjoyable and an inspiration to us all to continue our efforts to preserve the beauty and variety of our own Local Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Tony Meredith

Your Executive Committee Members are:-

CHAIRMAN - Judy Frazer-Holland (01242 580026)
Highfield, Leckhampton Hill, Cheltenham, GL53 9QJ

SECRETARY – James Blockley (07881 432077)
5 Gravel Walk, Tewkesbury GL20 5NH

TREASURER - Tony Meredith (01242 516393)
14 Greatfield Drive, Cheltenham, GL53 9BU

Tony Clifford	Serena Meredith
Anne North	Christine Ryder
Jack Shepherd	Roger Smith
Julius Marstrand	Allan Wood

Co-opted Vic Ellis
CBC Ex Officio

Articles for the newsletter can be sent to the Editor, Annette North, Shackleton, Daisybank Road, Charlton Kings Common, CHELTENHAM, GL53 9QQ or email anorth@leckhampton.fsnet.co.uk

We are delighted to welcome our new Secretary James Blockley. James was formerly employed by Cheltenham Borough Council in the Ranger Service but has moved on to join the Cotswold Canals Project. He is now a member of FOLK as he is keen to maintain his interest in the hill.

The views expressed in the articles are of those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of FOLK or its Executive Committee

FOLK Work Party Report Autumn 2006

The majority of our work parties during the last few months have involved re-siting the grazing paddocks on Charlton King's Common. This is a necessary and time-consuming part of the grazing project, which is so important to the upkeep of the grassland. We had an additional work party for this on Saturday, 11th November, a joint effort by FOLK and Cheltenham Borough Council Rangers. Unfortunately the grazing project has suffered from a considerable amount of vandalism. Fencing has been removed and scattered around the site, which means extra work for us in finding and replacing it, and the cattle water tank has suffered some minor damage.

Other work has been the removal of grass cut by Peter Jenner, our neighbouring farmer, on land adjoining the east side of the Cotswold Way between Salterley Quarry and the Hill Fort. The Cotswold Voluntary Wardens have had two work parties on the hill, working on grassland below the Hill Fort and above Daisybank Road. These areas have to be cleared by hand as they are not suitable for grazing by the Dexter cattle. If only FOLK could muster a work force of sixteen, think what we could achieve.

A major part of our programme of restoring and preserving the unimproved limestone grassland in the coming months will involve work on both sides of the track below Charlton King's Common and above the golf course. This work will create interlinked glades, in accordance with the Site Management Plan, and will involve the removal of some of the overhead canopy to allow in light and air to encourage recovery of flowers and insects. We will complete this by the end of March to avoid disturbance of nesting birds. As far as possible there will be no restriction of access while the work is being carried out.

Finally, a suggestion for your New Year's Resolution: join us on our work parties in the coming year to help you recover from the Christmas over-indulgences. They are very sociable events, you can work at your own pace, and we might even have Tony's Tea Wagon to provide refreshments.

Dates of Future Work Parties

Midweek Work Parties

Thursday 11 January 2007
Thursday 9 February 2007
Thursday 9 March 2007
Thursday 12 April 2007

Weekend Work Parties

Sunday 28 January 2007
Sunday 25 February 2007
Sunday 25 March 2007
Sunday 22 April 2007

Meet at Tramway Cottage Car Park, Daisybank Road at 9.30am. We provide the tools but wear stout footwear and bring your own gloves. If you require any further information please contact me on 01242 233116.

Allan Wood

Leckhampton hill

Walking slowly up the slopes,
our hearts full of hope.
Buzzards soar overhead,
we look carefully at where we're going to tread.
Devils chimney passes by,
thousands of birds start to fly.
At last we reach the top,
the views are good enough to make you hop!
On the way back down,
We look at all the leaves upon the ground.
Leckhampton hill is full of things,
so come and see the joy it brings!!!

By Jenny Smith



Jenny with her cousin
Matthew (left) and brother Harrison (right).

A final reminder to those members who have not yet sent in their membership renewal. If you have any queries please contact Anne North on 01242 522767.

Newsletter sponsored by the
Parish Councils of Leckhampton with Warden Hill, and Charlton Kings