



Friends of Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common

NEWSLETTER

Free to members; non members 25p

Issue 37 Autumn 2011

2011 Annual General Meeting

This year the AGM will be held on Tuesday 8th November 2011 at 7.00pm prompt at Leckhampton C of E Primary School, Hall Road, Cheltenham. The formal notice of the meeting, a nomination form for Executive Committee members, proposals and motions for discussion and the minutes of the 2010 meeting are enclosed with this mailing. Following the completion of the formal business, Ellie Phillips from the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) will be giving a talk entitled "Managing Cleeve Common for Multiple Interests". It should be very interesting to hear how a similar area copes and deals with the potential conflicts of interest from the various user groups, and what hints and tips we can glean and use to our advantage.

We would like some people to come forward to take one of a number of roles: the post of Secretary will be vacant after the AGM, the Newsletter Editorship has been unfilled for a couple of years and ordinary Executive Committee member numbers are low. Please do not leave it to the dwindling number of active members to keep to group alive and kicking. If you have a particular interest, bugbear or desire to see things done differently, make sure you influence us by joining the committee because we want your input and enthusiasm. Please feel free to contact any

Committee member for more information as to what is involved.

Crickley Hill parking charges

We are interested to know how the introduction of these charges have affected you. Have you stopped visiting Crickley, or changed the times you go to avoid the charge? Have you noticed an increase of visitors on Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common? And as a consequence found that your usual/preferred car parking place has been fully occupied? If so, we want to hear from you so that we can put your concerns forward to the relevant authorities, with evidence to back up our own perceptions of the situation.

A very unscientific survey of 5 people (who completed short questionnaire) was undertaken at the Paws in the Park event in Burrows Field in August, the results of which were not as we expected! Most normally parked in Tramway Cottage Car Park more than once a month, and used the hill for recreational or dog walking. Most had been doing so for many years, and only one had been displaced from Crickley Hill. Only one had noticed any increase in the usage of Leckhampton Hill and/or Charlton Kings Common, and had had problems parking. Every one also visited other local sites as well as Crickley, albeit at times when the charges did not apply.

Contact FOLK

Membership and Grazier: 01242 522767 Working Parties: 01242 238790
Chairman: 07717 326610 folk@marstrand.co.uk Treasurer: 01242 524138
Find the Friends of Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common on Facebook

Allan Wood

Allan, a founder member of Folk, a member of the Executive Committee, and the working party leader and coordinator died suddenly on 28th August 2011, aged 77.

Always an active man, he enjoyed the great outdoors and spent many happy hours and days walking and camping locally, in his beloved Lake District and elsewhere. Following his retirement, he became involved with the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens, FOLK as well as Sue Ryder at Leckhampton Court.

As the working party leader for FOLK, he turned out in all weather, and even when snow and ice prevented others doing anything, he was still prepared to spend the time sharpening tools. Despite needing to have a hip replacement, he remained committed to doing all he could for the good of the Hill. He was always ready and willing to help man a stall at events such as Paws in the Park, such was his desire to promote FOLK. A few

of the tributes included below from FOLK members show how much he will be missed, not just by FOLK but by other groups as well.

"Allan did so much for FOLK."

"He was always such a patient and quietly hard-working man, He will be very much missed by all who knew him."

"Allan did so much for the Hill and the Cotswold Way through work with Folk and the Cotswold Wardens."

"Allan was always very generous with his time and expertise, as well as extremely conscientious, reliable and committed. If he said he would do something, you could always count on him to deliver."

The following poem, read by his widow Shirley at his funeral, sums up Allan, his life and loves.

Wall by Norman Nicholson

The wall walks the fell –
Grey millipede on slow
Stone hooves:
Its slack back hollowed
At gulleys and grooves,
Or shouldering over
Old boulders
Too big to be rolled away.
Fallen fragments
Of the high crags
Crawl in the walk of the wall.

A dry-stone wall
Is a wall and a wall,
Leaning together
(Cumberland-and-Westmorland
Champion wrestlers),
Greening and weathering,
Flank by flank,
With filling of rubble
Between the two –
A double rank

Stone dyke:
Flags and through-
stones jutting out sideways,
Like the steps of a stile.

A wall walks slowly,
At each give of the ground,
Each creak of the rock's ribs,
It puts its foot gingerly,
Arches its hog-holes
Lets cobble and knee-joint
Settle and grip.
As the slipping fellside
Erodes and drifts,
The wall shifts with it
Is always on the move.

They built a wall slowly,
A day a week;
Built it to stand,
But not stand still.
They built a wall to walk.

I am very grateful to Allan for providing the following copy for the newsletter as promptly and efficiently as usual, prior to his untimely death. Ed.

FOLK Work Party Report, summer 2011

The work parties over the last few months have followed the regular pattern of re-positioning the grazing paddocks. We had hoped that this would have been almost at an end by now, with the introduction of the High Level Stewardship Scheme and the permanent fencing of the areas currently grazed. However, due to an unforeseen delay in the approval of the HLS Scheme, the current system of separate paddocks will continue for a while. We'll be pleased to see an end to this time consuming work.

We are fortunate in continuing to have support from the Community Service Team, under the guidance of Wayne Sedgwick. They have cleared several areas of ragwort, a plant that can be poisonous to cattle, and cleared other areas of invasive scrub. Together with the scrub removed by FOLK, this makes a lot of material to be disposed of. Often the only option has been to burn this, at or near the worksite, but this is not an

environmentally friendly method. We have looked at the possibility of buying or hiring a chipper, but the high cost of this, plus the difficulties presented by the steep nature of the sites, present problems. We will continue to monitor the matter.

Those of you who have walked along the track from the car park at Brownstone Quarry to the escarpment will have passed the reversion fields, which were seeded with grass and a wildflower mix a while ago. The area seems to have been taken over by Oxeye Daisies this summer, but we hope that next year we will see a more balanced mix of wild flowers, particularly as the fields have now been "topped".

In the coming months it will be hands-on conservation again, cutting the areas of grassland that can't be grazed, and removing any encroaching scrub. If you fancy a workout, don't go to the gym, join a work party. We meet at Tramway Cottage Car Park, Daisybank Road at 9.30am. We provide the tools but wear stout footwear and bring gloves.

Allan Wood

For further information contact

Mike (01242 238790) or Serena (01242 524138).

Dates of future Work Parties

October 2011	Thursday 13 th	Tuesday 18 th	Sunday 23 rd
November 2011	Thursday 10 th	Tuesday 15 th	Sunday 27 th
December 2011	Thursday 8 th	Tuesday 20 th	no Sunday work party
January 2012	Thursday 12 th ,	Tuesday 17 th	Sunday 22 nd
February 2012	Thursday 9 th	Tuesday 21 st	Sunday 26 th
March 2012	Thursday 8 th	Tuesday 20 th	Sunday 25 th

(and thereafter on the 2nd Thursday, 3rd Tuesday and 4th Sunday of each month except December, but please check if close to a Bank Holiday)

FOLK Exhibit at Paws in the Park in 2011

Once again Paws in the Park was held this year in Burrows Playing Field. The free entrance event organised by Cheltenham Borough Council was a great success. I do not think I have seen so many dogs in one place at one time even more than on Leckhampton Hill on a sunny Boxing Day or public holiday!

The weather in the morning produced showery rain, (we were thankful that we had our gazebo to shelter under) but it did not deter the dog competition classes in the main arena. Dogs and owners did not seem to notice the rain but it did reduce the visitors to our stand.

There were over fifty stands at the event with the business stands mainly focused on our canine pets (Vets, Micro-chipping, Grooming etc). There were also Charity stands, Community stands and refreshments. The cats Protection also had a stand but I saw no cats!

We had a rota of FOLK members who attended the stand all day. We displayed our information boards and gave out information and membership forms.

The weather improved in the afternoon and we had a good number of visitors to our stand with a lot of interest being shown in the hill, the completion of the dry stone walling project and the changes to the grazing regime. We also did managed to sign some new members to FOLK.

If you have never been to Paws in the Park it is a great local event for the area of Leckhampton and is well worth a visit next year with or without a dog.

Michael Donnelly



Thank You

to Cheltenham Borough Council. Following representations by FOLK a quantity of hardcore has been provided and laid by CBC to level the depression in Tramway Cottage car park, Daisybank Road. If you are aware of anything else that requires repair or attention, please bring it to our notice and we will do our best to rectify the problem.

Sponsorship

Once again the 3 local parish councils have generously contributed towards the running costs of FOLK. We would like to thank Charlton Kings, Leckhampton with Warden Hill and Shurdington Parish Councils for their continued support.

The Wall -

the final chapter of stage 1

Together with Cheltenham Borough Council, we are now in the final stages of planning and commissioning the plaque to commemorate the restoration of the dry stone wall along the southern boundary of Charlton Kings Common. If all goes to plan, this will be installed in the next couple of months, and an unveiling ceremony will be held on site to thank all those organisations, groups and individuals who contributed to the project.

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