



Friends of Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common

# NEWSLETTER

Issue 23 Free to members, non members 25p

SPRING 2006

## MOUNTAIN BIKING REPORT

### Building good relations on Leckhampton Hill

There will be some members of the club that are aware of my organised rides on Leckhampton Hill that fall on a Thursday evening in the Spring and Summer, and are moved to Sunday mornings when the daylight is limited. We refer to them as "Corrective" sessions. Mountain biking on and around the hill has been a passion of mine for about 3 years now, and during this time I have experienced some difficulties when trying to combine our activity with others wanting to enjoy what the hill has to offer. Well, for the next 12 months at least, I have been given the opportunity to try and make a positive impact on behalf of MTBing on the hill.

I have been a member of our local "Friends of" group "Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common" or FOLK as it is referred to, for a couple of years. At the last AGM held in October, I put myself forward as a committee member and was duly elected. I hope through effective communication between mountain bikers and FOLK / Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC), some harmony can ensue where currently conflict exists. One form of communication I propose is through our own club magazine with summaries of issues that are ongoing and actions taken to positively promote MTBing on Leckhampton Hill. As I am just starting this role and getting into the swing of things, I will summarise how I plan to operate over the coming year.



#### Key issues that we need to work on are:

- Potential collision with pedestrians as bike tracks cross footpaths.
- Uncontrolled track constructions.
- Erosion / altering of rain water run-off courses by some tracks.



I am fully aware that many of those involved with track building and riding them are not part of our club, although one strategy of mine will be to try and get them involved and join our club, but that's another matter. However, the last couple years or so has seen more of our MTB members giving some of these tracks a go. Not all the tracks are extreme but the hill does provide some excellent sections that tests a rider's skills to quite a high level.

#### Contents:

FRONT PAGE & PAGE 2 – Mountain Biking Report PAGE 3 & 4 – Modification Order PAGE 5 – Obituary, Work Party Report PAGE 6 – Work Programme PAGE 7 – View from the Hill PAGE 8 – Guided Walks PAGE 9 & 10 – Cotswold Limestone Grassland

Although I adore the tracks on Leckhampton Hill, I am not blinkered to the problems some riders cause. I believe taking a common sense and balanced approach will encourage constructive co-operation with CBC and members of the public who are concerned about some aspects of MTBing on the hill.

I am lucky to have a good relationship with the Council Officer responsible for the Hill, James Blockley, and I am confident we can make good progress towards solving some specific issues. Another important contact is former FOLK Chairman Julius Marstrand who some of you will know as he is former member of CC-CC.

I hope to have monthly tours of the hill with James and we will report back to the FOLK committee regarding issues we find. Any information that I feel should be made aware to the mtbing community will be through the following networks:

- o CC-CCs email group.
- o The club's Reflector magazine.
- o Notice boards in the town's various bike shops.
- o Personal contacts with local riders not currently members of CC-CC.

I would also like to encourage feedback from MTBers using the hill. That includes club members. If you have any suggestions relating to issues that arise over the coming year, please get in touch with me. I need to show FOLK and CBC that we are a mature and sensible organisation and that we do actually care about these issues. My contact details are listed below so get in touch if you think you can make a contribution.

In the next issue I will be reporting on how far we have managed to get with some of the issues, and how this is impacting on the perception of mountain king within FOLK / CBC.

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Photos supplied by Mike Dunsby and Graham Haller

**Your Executive Committee Members are:-**

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Co-opted  
Julius Marstrand      Anne North  
CBC Ex Officio

Articles for the newsletter can be sent to the Editor, Annette North, Shackleton, Daisybank Road, Charlton Kings Common CHFI TFNHAM GL 53 9QQ or email [anorth@leckhampton.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:anorth@leckhampton.fsnet.co.uk)

## Modification Orders

The Notification of Modification Orders to 'upgrade' three tracks on Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common to Byways Open to All Traffic [BOATs] has, not surprisingly, caused some alarm. Irrespective of whether you would like motorised traffic to be banned from these tracks or not, the situation is not quite as bad as it would appear.

### The tracks affected:

#### 1 Daisybank Road

The unmade section is currently designated as a Road Used as Public Path [RUPP] CK 53 - this means that it is already open to traffic. Apart from pedestrians, horses & mountain bikes, it is mainly used by local residents and visitors to the site who are prepared to drive up the unmade section, usually as far as one or other of the two turning circles in old quarries. It is also open to 4x4s & trail bikes and is occasionally used for these purposes, although not to the extent that the mainly rocky track gets churned up by the traffic - the main damage to the surface, recently repaired by some of the residents, is erosion by rainwater run-off. If the application to upgrade the track from a RUPP to a BOAT is denied, everyone apart from local residents will be banned from driving up to and parking at the turning circles when they go for a walk on the Common.

#### 2 Sandy Lane

2a - the unmade stretch, between the golf course and the fields, up as far as the 'Y' fork is currently not designated, even as a footpath! However, it forms part of the old turnpike road from Cheltenham to Cirencester. It became redundant when the 'new' Cirencester Road was built in the mid 19th century, but as far as we can ascertain, there has never been a Traffic Restriction Order [TRO] applied to it - so pre-existing 'higher rights' still apply, consequently it is still technically 'open to all traffic'.

2b - the unmade stretch, from the 'Y' fork, up to Five Ways adjacent to Mountain Knoll Wood, is designated as a footpath CK 58. However, it also forms part of the old turnpike road, so, although it has been designated as a footpath, it would appear that no TRO has been placed upon it, so 'higher rights' apply & it is still technically 'open to all traffic', although these rights pre-date motorised vehicles, so there is an argument over whether they should apply to motorised vehicles.

#### 3 The Gallops

3a - the unmade stretch from Five Ways, adjacent to Mountain Knoll Wood, to about half way along the foot of Charlton Kings Common is currently not designated, even as a footpath! The designated footpath CK 58 runs parallel to the old turnpike road, along the wall to the golf course, although it is not open for all of its length. The main damage from vehicles occurs over a short muddy section just to the East of Five Ways.

3b - the unmade stretch from about half way along Charlton Kings Common to the end of the golf course. Here the designated footpath CK 58 rejoins the main track.

3c - the unmade stretch from the end of the golf course to the intersection with the Cotswold Way is designated as a footpath CK 60. Part of this, in the dip at the end of Charlton Kings Common, where it goes into the wood could be churned up by vehicles because of the mud that accumulates on the track. Elsewhere the track is rocky and does not suffer much damage from the limited amount of vehicular traffic that uses it.

3d - the unmade stretch from the intersection with the Cotswold Way to Hartley Lane at Minotaur Barn is designated as a footpath ACO 6. Planning permission was originally granted for a 'barn' at the Hartley Lane end, but the building was never really used as a 'barn' and shortly after it was built an application was made for a 'change of use' from a 'barn' to a 'house'. The owner of this property would like to have all motorised vehicles and even bicycles and horses banned from using this stretch of track which runs across his land, past his new house. Attempts to exclude vehicles a few years ago, by Cheltenham Borough Council, were blocked in the courts by a 4x4 club.

Like the upper, unmade end of Sandy Lane, The Gallops [from 3a to 3d] also forms part of the old turnpike road, and no section of it appears to have had no TRO placed upon it, even where it has been designated as a footpath, so 'higher rights' apply & it is still technically 'open to all traffic'.

## What is behind the Modification Orders

The motive behind the application for Modification Orders is not to get the tracks 'upgraded' from their present status, but to *prevent them from being downgraded*.

Under 1968 and 1981 legislation, such tracks were supposed to have been considered for upgrading to Byways, but very few Councils, including Gloucestershire, put in the necessary resources to implement that legislation, so their status was never regularised.

Under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 [CRoW Act] any existing tracks and RUPPs, that were not previously classified as Byways and have not been reclassified as BOATs, will automatically be downgraded to Restricted Byways and existing vehicular rights will be lost.

Even more serious for off road drivers and riders, under Clause 62 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Bill, currently before Parliament, existing vehicular will be extinguished immediately, if Modification Orders have not already been applied for.

It is this that has triggered blanket applications by 4x4 drivers and trail riders to protect all existing tracks in the country, irrespective of whether they are currently used.

### The Objections

The main reasons for many people wanting motorised vehicles banned from these tracks are safety, environmental damage and noise. These are very valid grounds for objecting to motor vehicles.

Safety is less of an issue for 4x4s because they cannot travel very fast on the tracks on Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common, so they pose little threat to other users.

Trail bikes can be more of a problem, because they can reach much higher speeds, particularly along the straight sections of The Gallops. However, the tiny minority of trail riders who ride irresponsibly are not those who are most likely to be affected by banning them from the tracks.

There is an issue of erosion of the tracks, but the rocky surface and relatively light use make this less of a problem on Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common than on some other sites.

There are only two places where The Gallops tends to get churned into mud and if traffic

increased it might be necessary to maintain these parts of the track. Most erosion on Daisybank Road and Sandy Lane is caused by rainwater run-off, not vehicles.

The Site is a **Site of Special Scientific Interest** and there is concern that, if allowed onto these three tracks, 4x4s & trail bikes might go off the tracks and onto the SSSI, where they could cause significant environmental damage. However, there is little evidence that existing off road users deviate from the tracks very often.

There is a problem with a tiny minority of drivers and riders, particularly the drivers of stolen vehicles and unlicensed motorbikes and scooters, who do drive off the tracks onto the Site. Unfortunately, they are the kind of drivers and riders who would probably ignore the designation of the tracks anyway, so downgrading the tracks may not stop the problem, but would deprive responsible drivers and riders of legitimate access.

Noise is the other major concern. Slow moving 4x4s are not much of a problem in this regard, especially when so few of them use the tracks. 4x4s legitimately using private land in Mountain Knoll Wood, immediately adjacent to the Site, are likely to create significantly more noise than 4x4s on the Site.

Off road motorcycles are much noisier than 4x4s, but not much noisier than mowers or chainsaws used on the Site, or in neighbouring gardens.

Despite this many people may still prefer to see 4x4s and motorcycles banned from these tracks, in which case they can oppose the Modification Orders.

### FOLK's position

FOLK's membership is almost certainly divided on the issue of these Modification Orders and the same is true of the Executive Committee. Rather than taking a decision that may not represent the majority view of FOLK's membership, the Executive Committee has so far agreed to neither support, nor oppose the Modification Orders. It is seeking more information, but it is unlikely that a consensus will be reached.

Just as individuals who would like to see 4x4s and motorcycles banned from these tracks can oppose the Modification Orders, anyone who thinks that existing vehicular rights should be preserved can support the Modification Orders.

**Julius Marstrand**  
**FOLK Executive Committee Member**

## OBITUARY of DAVID BICK

New Enlarged Edition  
**OLD LECKHAMPTON**  
Quarries-Railways-Riots-Devil's Chimney



DAVID BICK

F.O.L.K. sadly note that local Historian David Bick died in his home in Newent on the 19<sup>th</sup> January aged 76. He was an author of over 20 books, including two which gave valuable historical details of Leckhampton Hill and its associated industrial tramways and railways, namely "Old Leckhampton" (published by the Author 1971) and "The Gloucester & Cheltenham Tramroad and Leckhampton Quarry Lines" (Enlarged Edition published by Oakwood Press 1987).

He was born in Cheltenham, attended the Grammar School and went to Leeds University to study mechanical engineering. In due time his full qualification was B.Sc. (Hons), C.Eng, M.I.Mech E, F.S.A. He was employed at Dowty Engineering from which he retired in 1986. He was actively involved in local matters and was chairman of Newent Civic Society. His interest in Mines, Quarries, Railways and Canals resulted in the publication of many books, pamphlets and articles on these topics. He was also a vintage car enthusiast. He will be greatly missed not only by his wife and family but by all interested in researching and recording the Past for the benefit of generations who follow.

### FOLK Work Party Report Winter 2005/6

The dry winter months of December and January have enabled us to continue with our programme of scrub clearance on the south side of the unmetalled part of Daisybank Road. We also removed some trees that were fouling the overhead telephone cables.

We will have to delay the replacement of damaged notice boards until the spring due to the lack of FOLK manpower.

However, the long awaited new litter bins will hopefully have been sited in the car parks by the time this report is published. Cheltenham Borough Council has

arranged for these bins to be emptied regularly and litter removed from the adjacent parking areas.

On Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> February I arranged for my colleagues in the Cotswold Voluntary Warden Service to erect a fence around a deep water overflow pit that collects surface rainwater near the entrance to Salterly Quarry car park. The Wardens, assisted by Peter Jenner (our local farmer) also filled in a number of large potholes in Brownstone Quarry car park, but unfortunately there was insufficient material to complete the task. This was

funded jointly by Cheltenham Borough Council and FOLK and we hope further funds will become available in the coming months to finish the project. Our thanks go to the Wardens and Peter Jenner for their help.

The spring and early summer months will see FOLK work parties turn their attention to fence repairs, footpath maintenance, ragwort pulling, and the never ending chore of litter clearance. We can always do with more help so come and join us. You'll get the satisfaction of doing a worthwhile job and you might even enjoy yourself!

#### Dates of future Work Parties

##### Midweek Work Parties

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2006  
Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2006  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2006  
Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2006

##### Sunday Work Parties

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2006  
Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2006  
Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2006  
Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2006

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

	FOLK		CBC		Others	
	Administrative	Conservation	Administrative	Conservation	Administrative	Conservation
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	Discuss mountain bike slalom course	Spray ragwort April/May. Pull ragwort June/July.	Discuss mountain bike slalom course with FOLK	Erect warning/no fires/no motorbikes/no camping signs.	Seek funding for 1, 2 & 3 adjacent.	1. Carry out Baseline Archaeological Survey
B	Membership drive with a new leaflet delivered to local residents.	Investigate areas of hazel for coppicing next winter.	Progress manufacture & erection of interpretation boards, stones & leaflets.	Cut hay July/August area 19.		2. Carry out structural survey of Limekilns
C		FOLK experts - Initial species monitoring of birds & butterflies.	Continue consultation & investigation over wheelchair access			3. Conduct Geophysical Survey of Iron Age Fort
D	Discuss possibility of 'Quiet Lanes' over the gallops, Sandy Lane, Db Road & Hartley Lane. See CPRE web site.	Repair fence alongside Motorway ASH47. Erect fence round headland next to FP ASH 40 & erect kissing gate. CBC to provide materials.	Apply for combined Modification Order for Rights of Way: a) As recommended in the SMP b) To provide Bridleway access from South West of Site c) Progress or combine application for re-classification of Sandy Lane & 'The Gallops' by means of a Path Creation Order (without necessarily seeking a Traffic Restriction Order on the old Tumpike Road)	Position litter bins in Salterley & Brownstone car parks. Cotswold Warden Service may be able to help with this if required.	CBC or FOLK to liaise with GSIA re possibility of exposing stone blocks that supported the tram rails in the depression next to DB Road.	
E	Establish what fees, if any, may be payable for agreed Modification Orders for Rights of Way-meet on site with GlosCC Highways Dept. and CBC.	Decide on positions for Fixed Point Photography for biodiversity monitoring.	Arrange for Fixed Point Photographic Survey of the Site covering: a) Vegetation; b) Geoconservation; c) Historical. Especially in grazed & mown areas.	Repair recent damage to transformer house at the kilns.		
F		Routine Path Clearance esp. scrub adjacent to FP ASH 35 where it has been repaired.	Investigate & report on progress of Single Farm Payment Scheme.	Take photos for Fixed Point Photographic Survey in July & collate photos from other sources.		
G	Continue consultation over interpretation boards.	Mow & remove arisings - area 35 (floor of Brownstone Quarry), area 16 & 16a (grassland within woodland) & area 14 (butterfly motorway) August/September.	Review Job Description for Project Officer & discuss possible sources of funding, in consultation with FOLK & LHCG. JB.			
H	Identify trees & scrub obscuring Devils Chimney with view to removal from September onwards - areas 8, 9 & 15.	Assist grazer with erection/dismantling of electric fence & maintain a monthly review of the grazing regime.	JB to prepare plan for repairing eroded areas of ramparts and surface round Topograph. Plan to be discussed with FOLK, permission requested from Gloucestershire Archaeology & then added to DEFRA Conservation Plan.	DB Fields - top before thistles seed (July/August) & area 28 if required.		
I	Keep records of where & when grassland is grazed. Consider grazing area 28 before thistles need cutting.	Put stone from Salterley Quarry into potholes in gallops & various gateways.	Confirm land ownership & footpath maintenance in DB2 & adjacent land.	Repair large pot holes/puddles at Brownstone Quarry Car Park esp. at entrance with help from FOLK & CWS.	Develop & publicise guidance on the collection of specimens of rock & fossils. LHCG & Geo cons.	
J		Re-erect notice board Hartley Lane & Salterley Quarry and repair one in Brownstone Quarry.	Contact local schools with a view to trying to get Duke of Edinburgh Award candidates to participate in conservation work. Send CD of SMP.	Continue repair of stone boundary walls as required under ESA agreement. Priority: 1. On rampart 2. Salterley to CKC 3. Others.	LHCG to review action plan. Develop revised 5 year plan & roll forward by 1 year	
K	Support Leckhampton Local History Society walk 16 April.	Cut & treat or pull ash seedlings anywhere.	Contact Cotswold Way National Trail organisers and ask them to consult CBC & FOLK before replacing the 2 missing posts on CK Common.			
L	Organise walks/talks for members & general public.	Litter picking	Discuss what to spend ESA acreage payments on with FOLK.			

## A VIEW FROM THE HILL

When you look at the view from the escarpment of Leckhampton Hill do you ever wonder how the field pattern, with the miles of hedgerows, originated? You are looking at a landscape that has been developing since man first worked the land.

It started with the clearance of the wildwood that originally covered most of the countryside, but then, as people began to cultivate small areas of fertile land adjoining the early settlements, they raised banks to protect themselves from predators. Wooden stakes would be used to surmount these banks and to enclose further areas for livestock and cultivation. Over the years, as a result of natural colonisation by seed from nearby trees, many of the banks and staked boundaries began to mature into hedgerows. Other hedges were formed when woodland was cleared and dividing strips were left as instant boundary features. As time passed, people began to transplant seedlings to form new hedgerows. There is evidence of an old hedgerow from excavations of a Roman fort, and written reference in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the 8<sup>th</sup> century to a "haga", Old English for hedge.

Our ancestors began to realise the wider value of mature hedgerows as, in addition to enclosing stock, they also provided a continuous supply of fuel, a source of food and herbal remedies, and acted as a shelter belt for both livestock and crops. In 1330 there is a reference to an estate account for one man making a ditch and planting a hedge 18 perches (99 yards) long and 7ft wide at a cost of 6s. at 4d a perch.

This gradual enclosure of land continued slowly until the passing of the Enclosure Acts in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Between 1750 and 1850 more than 200,000 miles of hedgerow were planted, at least equal to all those planted in the previous 500 years. The old medieval field system disappeared and was replaced by a field landscape much as you see it from the hill today. But the post 1945 period of agricultural expansion and housing development saw the loss of many thousands of miles of hedgerows. We were fortunate that the impact in Gloucestershire was relatively small. It took until the 1990s for the problem to be fully recognised, when replanting began to outstrip removal.

Until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many of our hedges were maintained by the centuries old tradition of hedge laying but, due to escalating costs of manpower, this method of maintenance has been practiced on fewer and fewer farms in recent years. Most hedgerows are mechanically trimmed which tends to leave gaps at the base of the hedge after a few years; they are not stock proof and support less wildlife. The present advice is not to cut hedges annually but on a two to three year cycle, as this encourages a more diverse habitat for wildlife. Fortunately the recent introduction of grants for hedge laying courses has resulted in a revival of this traditional skill.

How do you determine the age of a hedge? Take roughly a 30metre length of hedge; if it contains basically a single species, such as beech, then it is almost certainly a relatively modern hedge. As the number of certain tree and shrub species increase, this is equivalent to the age of the hedge in centuries. For example, a hedge containing ten species can be dated at over 1,000 years old, which in many cases can be supported by documentary evidence. This is known as Hooper's Rule as it was developed by Dr. Max Hooper in the 1970s. He surveyed over 200 hedges of a known documented date and concluded that hedgerows acquire further species of trees and shrubs as they get older.

Think of this long and ancient history of our hedgerows when you next take a view from the Hill.

Allan Wood

# Guided Walks – Spring 2006

- ***'Leckhampton Riots Centenary Celebrations':***

Guides from Leckhampton Local History Society, GSIA and FOLK.  
Easter Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2.00pm for a 2.30 start.  
Meet at skittle alley of the Wheatsheaf Pub, Old Bath Road (GL53 9AJ).

Leckhampton Local History Society is arranging a walk on Leckhampton Hill during the afternoon of Easter Sunday 16 April, to commemorate (peacefully!) the centenary of the last of the protest marches against the closing of the footpaths. The march will start at 2.30 pm from the skittle alley of the Wheatsheaf, where some historic photographs will be on display. Before that Eric Miller will say a few words to set the scene and rally the marchers on their way to Tramway Cottage, where they will be met by James Blockley, the Leckhampton Hill Ranger. From there on (for those that feel able) Dr Ray Wilson of the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology will lead a walk towards the limekilns and quarries following the route of the old tramway and continuing on to the Iron Age Fort. Back at the Wheatsheaf refreshments will be available and the landlord has promised an ox roast in the evening.

- ***'The Ancient Archaeology of Leckhampton Hill':***

An informal walk and talk looking into the Iron Age remains of the area.

Guides from the County Archaeology Service and CBC.  
Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 12pm.  
Meet at Wagon Quarry Car Park (SO946177).

- ***'Spring bird walk on Leckhampton Hill':***

An informal and informative look into the hill's rich birdlife.  
Guides from FOLK and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.  
Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup>, 9.30am.  
Meet at far end of Highland Road, Cheltenham (SO954195).

- ***'Cotswold Blooms':***

An informal tour of the rare limestone grassland flora of the area.  
Guides from Cheltenham Borough Council.  
Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2pm.  
Meet at Tramway Cottage Car Park, Daisybank Road (SO949188).

All walks are **free** and will last approximately two hours.  
Each involves some rough terrain, so strong footwear is recommended.  
For further information, call James Blockley at CBC on 01242 250019



## Cotswold Limestone Grassland

### What is Unimproved Limestone Grassland?

Unimproved limestone grassland is an important wildlife habitat because it sustains a wide range of plants and invertebrates such as butterflies and rare snails. The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) contains a nationally significant proportion (over 50%) of the UK's total Jurassic unimproved limestone grassland. For this reason, conserving and managing the limestone grassland is a high priority.

### Why is Cotswolds Limestone Grassland Important?

In the 1930's, 40% of the Cotswolds was covered in wildflower limestone grassland. Today, fewer than 3,000 hectares remain - only 1.5% of the total area. Although much reduced, this is still a very important wildlife feature.

The limestone grassland that remains in the Cotswolds is important for the range of plants and invertebrates that are found. Grassland sites typically contain, for example, over 100 species of wildflowers and grasses and 25 species of butterflies. The grassland is home to a large number of rare and declining plants, including many species of orchid and other rare species of flowers.

Cotswold grassland also supports nationally rare butterflies, such as the Chalkhill Blue and the Duke of Burgundy and it sustains a multitude of insects, which in turn provide food for bats, birds and mammals.

### How is the Limestone Grassland under Threat?

The greatest threat to the survival of the remaining wildflower grassland is a lack of grazing or other suitable management.

Without grazing, coarse grasses, scrub and eventually woodland develops, reducing wildlife diversity. Many grassland sites can be prone to considerable pressure for recreation from people walking, riding and cycling.

Greater public access will require a more careful approach to site management and interpretation as the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (Part I) will widen the number of sites available for public enjoyment.

### How can Limestone Grassland be managed?

In order to keep what remains of our wildflower rich limestone grassland, it is important to manage it carefully. This will involve local people, farmers and interest groups working together.

Caring for the grassland properly will ensure that we:

- Conserve and enhance its wildlife interest
- Maintain an important feature of the countryside of the Cotswolds AONB
- Use grassland as part of a viable farm system
- The open nature of the land is protected for public enjoyment



## Scrub

It is important to control scrub encroachment on grasslands sites. It is a natural process and has its benefits for wildlife.

- Some bird species rely on scrub for nesting, feeding and roosting
- Managed scrub is particularly important for invertebrates providing food, shelter and territory
- Reptiles use scrub for foraging, nesting, resting, hibernation and to aid thermo-regulation
- Large mammals use scrub for cover, feeding and nesting

20% of an area of grassland sites should remain as well managed scrub. Scrub of high conservation interest contains many native shrub species and is often found where grassland and ancient woodland occur together.

## Juniper

Juniper is a native plant of limestone grassland. It is easily lost to scrub encroachment, over-grazing by rabbits and theft and nationally is in decline. A handful of sites in the Cotswolds AONB contain Juniper and its conservation is a high priority.

## Archaeology

Many areas of Cotswold limestone grassland have remained undisturbed for centuries and are therefore rich in archaeological features.

Managing the grassland significantly contributes to the management of the archaeology. Protecting and managing our Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other historical and archaeological sites is a high priority.

Jenny Phelps  
Cotswolds Conservation Board.

## FOLK MEMBERSHIP

Whilst renewals have been very good, like any organisation more members are always very welcome. With this Newsletter you should receive a membership application form, and we would ask every member to recruit at least one new member – a friend, neighbour, relative, work colleague.

As you will see from the Work Programme, FOLK's work is ongoing in helping to maintain the Hill and Common we all love, and more help is always welcome.

*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*



**Cheltenham in Bloom**  
working in partnership with FOLK  
in the year of the volunteer