



Friends of Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common

NEWSLETTER

Issue 25 Free to members, non members 25p

AUTUMN 2006

Thanks to a generous grant to FOLK from the Cotswolds Conservation Board's Sustainable Development Fund, 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 Information Centre, Library, Museum and schools. You will find your copy with this Newsletter.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7 pm WEDNESDAY 1st NOVEMBER

LECKHAMPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hall Road, Leckhampton

AGM followed by talk on

Why the Cotswolds is designated as an Area of Outstanding Beauty

By John Heathcott,

Cotswold Volunteer Warden Service

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FOLK Work Party Report Summer 2006

Despite the very dry weather in June and July, the ragwort on the hill still managed to survive but was not as widespread as in previous years. Are we winning the battle? Fortunately there is little of this toxic weed in the grass areas being grazed. We will never manage to eliminate it completely as it will still continue to colonise the inaccessible quarry faces and spread its seed to other areas.

We have erected a new notice board at the foot of Windass Hill, which was funded by a donation last year from Charlton King's Parish Council. More temporary fencing for grazing paddocks has been installed on Charlton King's Common, and the cattle are back on the hill now that they have been given the all-clear on their TB tests.

Some of the footpaths on the hill need clearance work; grassland areas need cutting to prevent encroachment by scrub and ash saplings. We hope this work can be done in the coming months. However we only average 7 members on our work parties and so are limited as to what we can achieve. Are there any members out there who would be prepared to operate brush cutters? We'll show you how!

We have taken our display boards to several local events this summer and have had some success in recruiting new members. Do join our work parties if you can.

LECKHAMPTON HILL NEEDS YOU!

Dates of Future Work Parties

Midweek Work Parties

Thursday 12 October 2006
Thursday 9 November 2006
Thursday 14 December 2006
Thursday 11 January 2007

Weekend Work Parties

Sunday 22 October 2006
Sunday 26 November 2006
No Sunday work party in December
Sunday 28 January 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 want further information please contact me on 01242 233116.

Allan Wood

Your Executive Committee Members are:-

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

SECRETARY - Vic Ellis (01242 230442)
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TREASURER - Tony Meredith (01242 516393)
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Tony Clifford
John North
Jack Shepherd

Serena Meredith
Christine Ryder
Roger Smith

Allan Wood

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, CHELTENHAM GL53 9QQ or email anorth@leckhampton.fsnet.co.uk

CHARLTON KINGS COMMON 1968

At a recent Leckhampton Hill Consultative Group site visit and meeting – the Natural England (previously English Nature) 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 it does mean that it is moving in the right direction.



CHARLTON KINGS COMMON 2006



This clearly shows the extent of scrub encroachment and highlights the need for continued grazing and conservation work.

September to March

– the time of the year for the bulk of the conservation work.

Who will you see doing practical tasks on site in the next six months?
FOLK work parties; BTCV youth group; Cotswold Volunteer Warden Service; Cheltenham Borough Council work force; Gloucestershire Geo-conservation Volunteers; Contractors; The Graziers - THE DEXTER CATTLE - 24/7 !

WORK PROGRAMME SEPTEMBER 2006 TO MARCH 2007

	FOLK		CBC		Others	
	Administrative 1	Conservation 2	Administrative 3	Conservation 4	Administrative 5	Conservation 6
A	Discuss mountain bike slalom course		Discuss mountain bike slalom course with FOLK	Erect 2 remaining warning/no fires/no motorbikes/no camping signs.	Seek funding for 1, 2, & 3 adjacent.	1. Carry out Baseline Archaeological Survey 2. Carry out structural survey of Limekilns
B	Membership drive with a new leaflet & interpretation leaflet delivered to local residents.	Investigate areas of hazel for coppicing next winter.	Organise with FOLK a LNR designation event. (Photos in paper with Mayor & show interpretation leaflets and boards.)			3. Conduct Geophysical Survey of Iron Age Fort
C	Deliver interpretation leaflets to members with the next newsletter.		Continue consultation & investigation over wheelchair access			
D	Discuss possibility of "Quiet Lanes" over the gallops, Sandy Lane, Db Road & Hartley Lane. See CPRE web site.	Remove Giant Hogweed from top of Top Incline.	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)		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.			Gloucestershire Geoconservation to remove & treat regrowth of cut scrub in area 11 as already agreed.
F		Routine path clearance. Especially clear overgrowth on ACO 6 (by Grassie's)	Report on progress of Single Farm Payment Scheme.	Take photos for Fixed Point Photographic Survey in July & collate photos from other sources.		
G		Mow & remove arisings - area 35 (floor of Brownstone Quarry), area 16 & 16a (grassland within woodland), area 14 (butterfly motorway), areas 17 & 18 (bumpy piece cleared last year) & area 23 (horse circle).	Review Job Description for Project Officer & discuss possible sources of funding. In consultation with FOLK & LHCG. Apply to SITA for funding. WS.	Scrub reduction as detailed in SMP Action Plan esp. areas 5 & 6 (PJ), 31 (& foliage at the side of the gallops)(JPN), 9, 33 in this order as already agreed.	MS to prepare plan for repair of eroded area of rampart & surface round Topograph. Plan to be discussed with FOLK together with possible sources of funding (?DEFRA Conservation Plan)	BTCV youth group - remove & treat: 1. Ash seedlings & regrowth areas 2 & 3 (above Hartley Lane) 2. Scrub regrowth on ramparts etc.
H	Identify trees & scrub obscuring Devils Chimney with view to removal from September onwards - areas 8, 9 & 15.	Assist grazier with erection/dismantling of electric fence & maintain a monthly review of the grazing regime.	Grant a 5 year grazing agreement (well before February).	DB Fields (1) - asap trim round bramble thickets to prevent them increasing in size (PJ)		
I	Keep records of where & when grassland is grazed.	Scrub reduction (as detailed in SMP action plan) esp. areas 5 & 6, 31 (& foliage at the side of the gallops), 9, 33, in this order as already agreed.	Confirm land ownership & footpath maintenance in DB2 & adjacent land.	Supply 10 more tons of stone to finish repair of large pot holes/puddles at Brownstone Quarry Car Park. Spreading to be done by FOLK & CWS.	Develop & publicise guidance on the collection of specimens of rock & fossils. LHCG & Geo cons.	
J		Re-erect notice board Hartley Lane.	Contact local schools with a view to trying to get Duke of Edinburgh Award candidates to participate in conservation work. Send CD of SMP & interpretation leaflets.	Continue repair of stone boundary walls as required under ESA agreement. Priority: 1. On rampart 2. Satterley to CKC 3. Others.	LHCG to review action plan. Develop revised 5 year plan & roll forward by 1 year	
K		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. With CBC organise a LNR designation event. Take display boards to Leckhampton School & drum up trade for AONB family walk in February. (AW)	Litter picking	Discuss what to spend ESA acreage payments on with FOLK.			
M			Continue to investigate possibility of extra winter grazing at Hill Farm			

Mothing Evening on Leckhampton, Saturday, July 8th 2006

Prior to the meeting, the weather forecast had become increasingly dire, so that even at 8.30pm on the Saturday night I was not sure if a light-trapping session was going to be possible. Nevertheless, we set up two light traps on the knoll above the wood by the Daisybank Road car park and then returned to the car park to see if anyone was going to risk the poor forecast and join us. We were pleasantly surprised to find a good crowd gathered expectantly in the rain and after our introductions, we set off in the gloom for a moth walk along Daisybank Road.

With the rain threatening to wash us out and very few moths flying, the evening held little prospect of success, but as we returned from the turning circle conditions improved and it was generally agreed that we would light up the traps at 10.15pm as planned.

Within minutes, moths started arriving at the traps, lead by an unprecedented onslaught of freshly emerged Blackneck, which usually appear in ones or twos at best. For the next two hours moths poured in, surprising the gathering with their bright colours (Swallow-tailed, Large Emerald), variety of size and shape (Drinker, Elephant Hawk-moth, Beautiful Hook-tip), and sheer numbers flying about the local area.

By the time we turned the traps off just after mid-night, I had recorded 95 species, and kept another half-dozen to examine more carefully. One of these was a distinctively marked micro-moth which I immediately recognised as a *Dioryctria* species, but not one with which I was familiar. Having photographed it next morning, (and released the moth back at Daisy Bank), I e-mailed the County Recorder for identification because it looked remarkably like a newly discovered UK species depicted on the UK Moths website and would need confirmation. He forwarded the photograph to the regional expert at Bristol Museum who decided that it was in fact an unusual variant of the species with which I was familiar.

The conditions turned out to be excellent - warm and humid - and the rain held off just long enough for everyone to enjoy a good evening of moth watching. Overall WE saw just over a hundred species, of which about 80 were macro-moths. Although there was only one Nationally Notable (Nb) species (*Epiblema incarnatana*), the species richness of the site indicates that there is a good ecological balance and that the management is being effective: moths are excellent ecological indicators because most of them stray little from their preferred food plant.

I would like to thank Ellie Haigh for organising and publicising the event so successfully, enabling us all to have a most enjoyable evening.

J S Brock 10/9/2006

New CBC Appointment

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 will be able to meet at the AGM on 1st November. Wayne has lived in Cheltenham for some 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.

Last week, whilst on a tour of inspection of progress on the hill and common, he met this group of walkers at the topograph enjoying a day out on the hill.



And finally ...

FOLK wishes to acknowledge the support of the Parish Councils of Leckhampton with Warden Hill and Charlton Kings towards the production costs of the newsletter.

HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE AGM.

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