



FOLKtalk

Issue 70
Autumn
2022

**Friends of Leckhampton Hill
& Charlton Kings Common**

Conserving and improving the Hill for you



WILDFLOWERS ARE FLOURISHING ON THE HILL

On sites across the Hill and Common the wildflowers native to this limestone grassland have been showing signs of doing well including the ones shown here (l-r field scabious, yellow rattle and common knapweed) as well as many others. In part this recovery has been helped by the new grazing regime which has allowed a far greater area to be undisturbed during the spring and summer.

Now seed from this site is being used elsewhere in the Cotswolds, to help establish new wildflower areas, including one new site in Cheltenham.

*Read more about the wildflower project and all the updates on the National Grid funded improvement programme in **The Word from Wayne** on page 11.*

Inside this issue

Read all about a prestigious award received by Cheltenham Borough Council, FOLK and the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens on page 4

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FOLK Annual General Meeting and Special Lecture

Tuesday 15th November 2022, 7.00 - 9.00pm

The Wheatsheaf (function room at side)
Old Bath Road, Leckhampton, GL53 9AJ

Non Members Welcome – Free Entry

Come to the AGM to find out about FOLK, what we do and the new projects to be undertaken on the Hill and Common.

After the AGM there will be a talk on

GRAZING WITH NATURE

given by Katie Allen of Heritage Graziers
whose cattle graze on Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common

Your copy of the AGM papers can be found either

- enclosed with your newsletter
- or
- through the links on the accompanying email

For further information about FOLK and the AGM
please see www.leckhamptonhill.org.uk

or contact the Secretary, Tony Duffin - leckhamptonhill@gmail.com

As we approach the winter a lot of outdoor events and activities reduce because of the weather and the **shortening of daylight hours** [reduction in light hours]. However this is not so with FOLK. Autumn and winter are busy seasons on the Hill and Common. In the summer months we cannot cut the grassland for hay or conservation until the end of July. This allows the flowers to seed and protects the ground-nesting birds. Similar restrictions prevent the summer clearance of scrub and gorse.



This winter we will be busier than normal. We have already started with two large projects to cut and clear gorse on Charlton Kings Common in order to increase the areas of unimproved limestone grassland. A contractor will cut and treat the gorse and FOLK will clear and burn the cuttings.

A continuing programme of cutting down trees that have ash dieback is to be progressed by Cheltenham Borough Council. This is based on Health and Safety for the public and focuses on trees close to public footpaths. On a more positive note we have a project to preserve and maintain a number of veteran ash trees using a consultant and a contractor specialising in veteran tree conservation.

We were very pleased to have supported Cheltenham Borough Council in the successful nomination for an award from CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) The Countryside Charity. This application was submitted by Cheltenham Borough Council as the land owner, but recognizes the time, care and effort by all parties in maintaining and improving the condition of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common.

I have only touched on a small number of activities that are to happen this winter on the Hill and Common. You will find far more detail in this newsletter and of course we have our **FOLK AGM 7pm Tuesday 15th November 2022** at the Wheatsheaf, with a talk by Katie Allen of Heritage Graziers about her popular British Whites and English Longhorns which will be back on the common in late October.

If you have any questions or feedback on public relations, please contact us by email at leckhamptonhill@gmail.com

Mike Donnelly, Chair of FOLK

AWARD FOR A GREAT TEAM EFFORT

Cheltenham Borough Council, FOLK and the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens have been recognised in the 2022 CPRE Gloucestershire Awards. Each year the many branches of the *Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)* present awards to projects which have made their local countryside considerably better. The purpose of the scheme is to “recognise and celebrate projects across Gloucestershire which demonstrate sustainability and have resulted in significant improvements to the environment and facilities for communities.”

The CPRE Awards judges met last month, and were delighted to let us know that ***“they were unanimous in their view that the great improvements that have been achieved on Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common should be recognised through a CPRE Gloucestershire Award”***.

CPRE Gloucestershire set three **general criteria**, all of which were met.

- All projects considered for the Gloucestershire Award should involve *improvements to the rural environment*, whether natural or built.
- Projects should *demonstrate sustainability* in their construction, use and management.
- Projects should be *visible* from public places.

The Hill and Common have great local significance, both in the town’s history and in local people’s enjoyment of this very special natural landscape. The submission, presented by Wayne Sedgwick on behalf of the Borough Council, noted many of the site’s key features:

- its important status as an unimproved limestone grassland, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest
- the many public rights of way which cross the land, including the popular Cotswold Way
- the spectacular views across a sweep of countryside from the Severn to Cleeve Hill
- its importance in supporting a variety of rare and endangered species specifically found on calcareous grasslands
- its historic development in quarrying for building stone

- its regular access for a wide variety of activities, including walking, running, horse riding, mountain biking, dog-walking, picnicking and even paragliding, as well as being a training site for emergency services, and a popular site for experts and/or enthusiasts in birds, bats, owls, moths and butterflies



A spectacular view much improved by the removal of gorse by FOLK

- engagement with local schools, Duke of Edinburgh Award students, and leisure and wildlife organisations
- the strong contribution of volunteers from FOLK and the Cotswold Wardens, as well as many local companies

Over the last few years a wide range of improvements have been made on the Hill and Common, all of which contributed to the achievement of this award.

The submission highlighted:

- improving public access and safety by refurbishing 1200m of the Cotswold Way across Charlton Kings Common and Ravensgate Common



Resurfaced section of the Cotswold Way

- rebuilding hundreds of metres of drystone wall using stone from a local quarry, with the construction work itself undertaken by the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens
- cutting back many old stands of tall gorse to improve views of the landscape
- improving and extending car park facilities to encourage public use of site
- creating a 2km, accessible “tramper” route
- improving the quality and quantity of the limestone grassland by removing older gorse and scrub, and adding 18 hectares of grassland on former arable land
- achieving and maintaining Higher Level Stewardship status 2011

- introducing a new conservation grazing regime on Charlton Kings Common using a grazer with heritage breeds and Nofence technology, and with grazing now restricted to the winter months to support wildlife recovery by enabling wildflowers to flourish
- improving both safety and views by removing many diseased ash trees and end-of-life larch trees
- preserving, protecting and explaining the Limekiln ruins

In concluding the submission Wayne Sedgwick noted that *“all of the groups and organisations which look after the preservation of the site understand that we are very fortunate to have such a unique resource so close to an urban area. It has been a struggle at times, but we are very proud of our achievements and accomplishments, and we realise the site will outlast us all”*.

The award is due to be presented to Cheltenham Borough Council, FOLK and the Cotswold Wardens in November. That occasion will offer the chance for the celebration of a marvellous achievement – a great reward for all the hard work put in by everyone involved in this tremendous project.

IN THE NEWS

BIGGER BEES SEEK COOLER CLIMES

Research conducted in the USA has highlighted a newly-identified feature of climate change: its effect on larger bees and, in turn, its impact on their role as pollinators. It seems that larger-bodied bees such as bumblebees have a lower tolerance of heat than smaller bees. Over an 8-year study the scientists observed a decline in the numbers of larger-bodied, cavity-nesting bees, while populations of smaller species which nest in the soil increased. The larger bees’ reaction to higher temperatures was to move somewhere cooler, typically at higher altitudes. This in turn threatens to disrupt existing patterns of pollination as larger bees fly further than smaller ones when gathering food, spreading pollen across a wider area.

ASH DIEBACK

Building resilience for the future

Ten years have passed since the first case of ash dieback in the UK was formally confirmed, and as we are only too aware locally, the impact of this disease is still continuing to wreak havoc.

However, as the number of infections continues to grow, scientists have been taking advantage of the opportunity this presents to investigate trees which have survived. These are termed “saviour trees” and comprise two broad groups: specimens which have not been infected at all, and trees which displayed only minor symptoms and are now showing signs of self-healing.

In 2018 the project’s scientists started creating a “living ark” of trees which survived the first wave of the outbreak. From these potentially dieback-resistant trees one thousand saplings were propagated and they are now growing in the National Archive of Tolerant Ash.

In the intervening years around four hundred of the original one thousand have died. Encouragingly, though, two hundred show no sign of the disease at all and another one hundred and seventy have only minor symptoms. Work is now under way to identify a second tranche of potentially resistant trees which may be added to the archive.

Since 2012, the impact of ash dieback has been devastating and hundreds of thousands of trees have died, changing the character and biodiversity of thousands of hectares of our countryside. Last year the National Trust alone felled more than 30,000 diseased trees, while a further 5,000 were taken down just within Westonbirt Arboretum.

Ash, though, is a very genetically diverse species. So this research will hopefully provide a growing population of the dieback-resistant variants – and offer a gleam of hope for the future of ash trees in our country’s woodlands.

SCOUTS LEND A HAND

FOLK is always keen to involve young people in caring for the Hill and Common. So FOLK Committee member and Cotswold Warden Oliver Pointer was delighted when the Leader of the 24th Cheltenham (Leckhampton) Scouts asked whether there might be an opportunity for an environmental work project. The upshot was that, on the evening of 6 July, Oliver led some twenty or so enthusiastic Scouts in cutting back the overgrown vegetation along the Lower Tramway footpath.

This right of way runs down from a point on Leckhampton Hill road opposite Daisy Bank Road, parallel to the main road but behind house gardens, and past the Scout hut, to re-join Leckhampton Road by the Leckhampton Views housing development. It is a popular route with walkers, and as it runs right by their hut, it seemed the obvious place for the Scouts, aged between 10 and 14, to get stuck into a little path clearance.

Before the practical work got under way, Oliver briefly outlined the historical significance of the path as the former route of the Lower Tramway incline, bringing quarried stone down in winched trucks known as 'trams'. He was also able to show them copies of old photographs which show the tramway and a row of cottages very close to the site of the present Scout hut, as well as the stone working yard and quarry stables where Leckhampton Views now stands.

Oliver also gave the Scouts a brief explanation of the role of FOLK and of his additional role as a volunteer Cotswold Warden. This includes "Parish Warden" responsibilities in Leckhampton and Shurdington - patrolling and keeping clear various local rights of way.

FOLK provided the equipment and, after a health and safety briefing, the Scouts got themselves into groups of three or four, collected some tools and set off up the path. Oliver spread the groups out and, with their Scout Leaders supervising, the cutting-back got into full swing.



Towards the end of the cutting session, Oliver led the Scouts up to the wooden remains of the winding jenny (pictured left) on the incline, explaining how the trams would have been brought across Leckhampton Hill road pulled by horses until they reached the steeper slope here.

They would then have been attached to a rope controlled from the drum on the jenny and lowered by gravity down to flatter land towards the bottom of the incline, where they would have been unhooked and pulled into the stone yard, again by horses.

He was also able to show them the many Forest of Dean sandstone square blocks still to be found along the course of the footpath (pictured right). Each of these stones has its tell-tale drilled fixing hole, on which the metal rails of the tramway would have rested.



At the end of two hours of energetic work the Scouts had cut back around two thirds of the line of the path. They were very positive about the work they had done along what, to most, had previously simply been just another local footpath.

With their leaders they expressed a wish to do a similar activity again in the future. Oliver, on behalf of FOLK, thanked them all for their hard work and enthusiasm and hoped to involve them again in some similar activities in the future.

FOLK AT CHARLTON KINGS AUTUMN FAYRE

Charlton Kings Parish Council arranged an Autumn Fayre on the 24th September.

This is the second CKPC fayre that FOLK have attended in 2022, with our display boards once again attracting much interest and FOLK volunteers taking the opportunity to talk to the public about our work.

We concentrated on informing visitors to the stand about the volunteer and contractor work which is taking place, and explaining the objectives of the



Restoring Cheltenham's Escarpment Grassland project, which is mainly funded by National Grid.

The weather was dry all day and we had a steady number of visitors to the stand. Many were very complimentary about the work which FOLK volunteers do on the Hill and Common. We had visitors coming to the stand right up to the end of the day and managed to sign up quite a number of new members.

These local events are a great way of helping the public to understand the planning and the purposes which lie behind all the work undertaken to conserve and improve the site. They also help to explain how FOLK, Cheltenham Borough Council, the Cotswold Wardens and the specialist contractors all work together for the good of the Hill and Common.

THE WORD FROM WAYNE

Wayne Sedgwick, Senior Ranger, Cheltenham Borough Council

PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE NATIONAL GRID GRANT

Grazing

The Conservation Graziers James and Katie Allen will be bringing their heritage herd back onto the Hill and Common later in October. There will be a similar number of cattle, around thirty including calves, as we saw last year and they will again be a mixture of British Whites and English Longhorns (pictured right).



The graziers will also be continuing with the Nofence technology, using transponders on the cows' collars to keep the herd within a boundary set by GPS without the need for physical fences.

They will start their time here up on the Reversion Field where one of the two "cattle crushes" have been installed. These large metal enclosures enable individual cows to be held for examination, TB testing etc. After a couple of weeks on the Reversion Field the cattle will be moved to the first of their winter pastures at the far eastern end of the site. As each defined area is grazed out, the cattle's pasture will be electronically adjusted to allow them to find new grass, and the herd will gradually move from east to west across the site, with their feeding supplemented by bales of hay as and when required.

We are already seeing the benefits of the new grazing regime. By taking the cattle off the site during the summer there has been a visible increase in the amount of flower-rich grassland. Indeed some species of wildflowers which had, in the past, been grazed heavily during the summer are now thriving, increasing in numbers and setting seed for next year. So for this reason the cattle will not be grazing at all in some areas where the wildflowers are recovering – another benefit of the close control of the grazing made possible by the Nofence technology.

Trees and scrub

The National Grid grant has enabled the Borough Council to arrange a number of contracts for specialists to improve the landscape.

- On Ravensgate around fifty ash trees which have been seriously weakened by ash dieback will be felled to prevent the risk of branches falling onto nearby footpaths.
- Five “veteran” ash trees will receive targeted treatment to prolong their already impressive lifespan. Typically a veteran ash tree is 100-200 years of age, and may need good care to survive to “ancient” status of around 225 years.
Our trees will be helped in two ways. Firstly most other ash trees within a fifty metre radius will be removed to make it more likely that the veterans avoid ash dieback. Secondly, some veteran ash may have a few higher branches removed to allow their lower branches to develop and so increase the tree’s stability.
- A large group of larch trees will be felled. These are not native to this landscape but were part of a new planting scheme in the 1970s. They are now nearing the end-of-life stage and their removal will also open up new views.
- Work will continue on the challenging task of removing gorse and scrub from slopes which are too steep and dangerous for our FOLK volunteers to reach. Specialist contractors will complete this task during December and January, and this in turn will allow more grassland and wildflower populations to flourish.
- On Ravensgate the Robocut mower will return to clear more of the grassland of gorse. This large, remote-controlled mower will quickly undertake the removal of scrub which would otherwise take many hours of manual labour.

In addition to these National Grid-funded works, Cheltenham Borough Council is funding the removal of a large number of diseased ash trees along the steep path which runs up from Tramway Cottage to the Limekilns. Like other recent projects this will make a popular route much safer.



Cotswold Stone Wall

Great progress has been made in recent months on the stretch of the wall where the Stalwart's Memorial stands. Here the Cotswold Wardens are not only rebuilding the wall but also installing large flat stones which will, in time, be used by people to place memorial plaques. The ground in front of the wall has been cleared of gorse and scrub

and the area generally tidied, though of course the array of differently sized stones seen spread on the grass is an obvious sign that this important new project is still very much ongoing.

Resurfacing the Main Incline

Following the successful work on the length of the Cotswold Way which overlooks Cheltenham and Cleeve Hill, attention was turned to the Main Incline. This steep and tricky path follows the route of the standard gauge track which used to bring wagonloads of stone down from the old quarries. The path itself had become badly eroded, but an equally troublesome problem was the persistent flooding in and around Bridge Car Park on Daisybank Road. This affected both the parking area itself and the ground by gateway which leads up the hill through the woods to meet the Main Incline.

In Bridge Car Park a contractor has now sunk a large vertical drainage pipe into the ground and installed an underground sloping pipe to carry the water away. During recent heavy rain it certainly seems that this has successfully solved a long-standing problem. Further up on the path which follows the Main Incline a complete resurfacing has been carried out. This will preserve the route from erosion and make walking safer for all who use the route. There has been some degrading of the edges of the new surface caused by torrential rain which fell before it was fully bedded in, but it is hoped that this problem will be addressed before very long. Despite this, though, the whole route is already much improved.

OTHER PROJECTS

Bringing the countryside into Pittville Park

As we reported in the last edition of FOLKtalk, the Borough Council has been working with the Cotswold National Landscape (formerly Cotswold AONB) on a scheme to harvest wildflower seed from the Hill and use it to re-wild other spaces.



Glorious Cotswold Grasslands is a project run by the Cotswold National Landscape to restore wildflower grasslands across the Cotswolds. Wildflower seed is collected from local meadows using a brush seed harvester to be spread on similar nearby recipient sites. In the first three years of the project, over 200 hectares of new areas of grassland were seeded and the project aims to create the largest network of Jurassic limestone grassland in England.

The team at CNL, led by Anna Field, had previously praised the diversity of wildflowers on Hopkins Field and so it was here that they came to collect seeds. The seeds gathered are typical of healthy limestone grassland, including: yellow rattle, salad burnet, common knapweed, field scabious, bird's foot trefoil, wild carrot and cowslip. The CNL then processed the seed and returned half to the Borough Council, keeping the rest for other Cotswold sites.

A key aim of this project was to bring to the town the sort of wildflower-rich space which is normally only found in the countryside. So on 6th October, the Mayor put on gardening gloves and helped volunteers sow the seed in a specially chosen area of Pittville Park. It will be very rewarding to see these seeds grow into wild flowers next year, offering all sorts of pollinators much needed nectar and pollen, not just in the next growing season but for years to come.

Looking ahead, the project also gives the Borough Council a chance to create its own seed bank. In that way we can continue to harvest our own seed and create other wildflower areas across the town.

Youth Engagement

We continue to build good working relationships with local schools. In a recent session, Borough Council Ranger Lucy Wise led thirty pupils from Cheltenham College in clearing unwanted growth on and around Brownstones Car Park. At least two more sessions, involving Cheltenham College and the High School Leckhampton are already planned in the near future.

Safety on footpaths and mountainbike trails

The long process of mapping and re-configuring some of the many criss-crossing routes on the Hill is now starting to take shape. The main aim of the project is to reduce the risk of accidents, especially at points where footpaths and mountain bike trails cross. Earlier some of the more dangerous intersections were remodelled and a few mountainbike trails were actually blocked off. Now the Cotswold Wardens have started the task of installing some new signage.

Some “Guidance” signs will help to make it clear where cyclists must not ride, while others will indicate mountain bike tracks which walkers are asked to avoid to prevent putting themselves and mountain bike riders at risk. Other “Warning” signs will alert walkers and mountain bikers at points where walking and mountain bike paths meet. As this work progresses it is hoped that both mountainbike riders and walkers can go on enjoying the many routes across the Hill while keeping each other safe.



IN THE NEWS

MORE TIME GIVEN TO SAVE OLD FOOTPATHS

Earlier this year the government has announced the decision to scrap the original deadline of 2026 for registering forgotten historical paths.

The original cut-off date to apply to record any rights of way was included in the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000. It applied to paths that did not appear on official maps so long as they are on private land and were also in existence before 1949.

A number of voluntary organisations have been campaigning to have the deadline removed, including the Ramblers and Open Spaces Society. This recent change of policy will help to ensure that important footpaths in both urban and rural spaces could be protected.

The current legislation enables people to use historical evidence to apply to have old rights of way added to official maps – and hence benefit from legal protection. The Ramblers have said that it had discovered over 41,000 miles of potential “missing” rights of way to be investigated and applied for in England as part of its "Don't Lose Your Way" campaign.

Advice from either the Ramblers or the Open Spaces Society (OSS) on claiming an unregistered path may be found by following the links:

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/paths-in-england-and-wales/definitive-maps-explained/how-to-claim-an-unrecorded-right-of-way.aspx>

<https://www.oss.org.uk/need-to-know-more/information-hub/rights-of-way-applications-to-record-public-paths-after-twenty-years-use/>

WARFARE ON THE HILL

The secret - and not so secret - history

For such a tranquil setting, the top of Leckhampton Hill has a very, very long military history.

Many FOLKtalk readers, and indeed many local walkers will be only too familiar with the remains of the ancient hillfort. Leckhampton Camp is a *Scheduled Ancient Monument*.



It takes the form of a “univallate” hillfort (a term for an earthwork of fortification with just one rampart) and is believed to date from the Iron Age from around 800BC to AD43.

At that stage combat was waged with bows and arrows, swords, daggers, javelins, spears and axes.

There are surviving ramparts to the south and east sides and a large ditched feature to the north.

The distinctive trig point stands on top of one of the east rampart. FOLK volunteers help with the annual process of mowing and clearing the ancient site to make the hillfort more readily visible for visitors.

As Eve Andrew and Eric Brewin noted in their booklet *Leckhampton Through The Ages*, “*The choice of the Leckhampton site for a hill fort is not surprising. It commands an extensive view of the Severn Vale and a natural ravine provides some shelter within the camp.*”

Fast forward 1,900 years to the Second World War and the Hill once again holds a strategic importance, but in a very different way, and against very different weaponry from that once seen at the ancient hillfort. In 2008, Edition 30 of FOLKtalk carried an article which explored various installations on Leckhampton Hill and Birdlip Hill. Broadly speaking these were concerned with the transmission



of military communications. However, there was some uncertainty then about the Leckhampton Hill unit (pictured here in the centre of the square hillfort), not least because there is nothing remaining of the equipment itself, though something of it still existed when this photo (left) was taken in the 1960s. At the time of writing that 2008 article, it was believed to be a form of radio transmitter set up

during the war for sending or relaying short wave messages. That was a common system at the time, before the development of VHF signals during the war.

Now John Putley (Community Heritage Officer, Gloucestershire County Council) has looked further into the evidence and history of such installations. The Second World War, of course, saw rapid technological progress.

According to John's research the Leckhampton site was more likely to be part of a new network of equipment designed not just to communicate, but actively to thwart enemy action. He thinks the building might have been a High Frequency Radio Detection Finding ("HF/DF") station (example pictured right).



These were used to triangulate radio transmissions from enemy ships or planes, allowing the Allies to seek out and attack the source. They also helped RAF ground control to determine a much more precise location for its own airborne planes, and hence redirecting the nearest pilots to intercept incoming enemy aircraft.

According to Doug Tidy (HF/DF Operator 74 Squadron) quoted on the website www.battleofbritain1940.net this system (affectionately known as Pip-Squeak because of the high pitched noise it made) automatically emitted a 14-second signal every minute enabling the Sector Controller to know exactly where each plane was.

John Putley adds that there were quite a few of these stations (mostly facing west) as the more there were, the more accurate were the fixes they obtained.

While it is unlikely that any firmer conclusions may be drawn from the evidence currently available, John Putley's investigation is a valuable contribution to the solving of an eighty-year-old mystery.

MIRACULOUS MIGRANTS

Before too long we will start to see a change in our bird population as waves of migration begin. In fact the RSPB believes that around half of the UK's bird species migrate each year. Some, like swifts, swallows and cuckoos, will make huge journeys spanning thousands of miles to seek out warmer climes. Others, like many species of ducks and geese, inhabit territory to the north or east in the summer, but come to overwinter in the UK where temperatures are less extreme and winter food is more readily available.

Far less conspicuous – and possibly even more fantastic - is the migration of insects. One species which has been studied in considerable depth is the Painted Lady butterfly. These colourful creatures, weighing just half of one gramme, spend their year on an almost continual journey.



Painted Lady butterfly

Leaving West Africa in autumn they work their way up to North Africa by late winter reaching the Mediterranean by Spring. They eventually reach the UK by May/June, though some keep going, flying as far as Finland. By late summer the whole population will begin its

southbound journey once again.

Unsurprisingly, there is a lot more than meets the eye to this extraordinary migratory venture. The first feature is that such a marathon effort is beyond the capacity of such a short-lived insect. In fact it is believed that the whole cycle, starting and ending in West Africa, takes around six generations of Painted Ladies to complete.

The second feature is the cold hard fact that, for such a tiny, fragile species, there are many very significant risks. This series of breeding cycles is highly dependent on the butterflies finding enough of the right sort of food at the right time in the right place. When everything goes well, though, the European population may reach several billion.

On top of this risk, butterflies are also always very susceptible to adverse conditions, including of course bad weather. During migration they may reach amazingly high altitudes, sometimes more than a kilometre, but a strong adverse wind has still been known to wreak havoc. In one year violent headwinds caused

a large proportion of the migrating masses to fall into the Atlantic Ocean.



Silver Y moth

The Painted Lady is not our only migratory insect. A similar long-range migrant is the Silver Y moth, starting its round trip in North Africa or the Middle East. In a normal year around 25 million Silver Y moths may reach Britain, and in what is termed a “mass invasion” year this number may reach a staggering 250 million.

One of the joys of summer is the sight of our wonderful array of butterflies and moths. The fact that some of them have undertaken such epic journeys just to reach our shores only adds to that pleasure – and to our continued sense of wonder at their eternal resilience.

FOLK WORK PARTY REPORT

We managed to do a variety of jobs over the summer, although we did have to cancel two work parties due to the high temperatures that we experienced.

Our major task for the summer was to clear the growth that was encroaching onto various sections of walling and fencing. As can be seen from the before and after photos below some of the growth had totally enveloped the fence.



Earlier in the summer we had supported the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens with their work to rebuild the Cotswold stone wall which runs up from Hartley Lane.



This involved removing sections of the old wall in the area that is being converted into a Memorial Wall and repositioning the new stone to make it more accessible. Later in the summer we returned to clear a second section.

As is a regular occurrence, we have been lucky to be joined by a number of young people who have volunteered as part of their work towards their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. The photos below show some of them helping with the mowing of the ancient Barrow and alongside one of the Cotswold stone walls.



Other tasks that we have done in this period include: pulling up and disposing of Ragwort; clearing various footpaths with help from the Gloucester Vale Conservation Volunteers; mowing the clearing above Bridge car park; clearing the quarrying tramway sidings so that they remain visible (see the before and after photos below).



As this is the end of FOLK's year, here are some statistics. They're not bad!
During the year from October 2021 to September 2022:

- we held 32 work parties
- they were attended by about 55 different volunteers
- we clocked up a total of 1,441 hours of work

We were also joined by groups released by their companies to volunteer with us. They were from Kohler Mira, who are regulars, and from Atkins/GCC.

We must give our sincere thanks to everyone who has volunteered over the year, be it for just one work party, or all 32 as one volunteer did. Where would we be without you!!

We should also thank the other people who do their bit on the Hill outside of formal work parties. The most notable ones being the generally unseen/unknown people who regularly do litter picking. A big thank you to you all.

As you can see, there is always plenty to do. So, if you, or anyone else you know, would like to join in, please do join any of our FOLK work parties. We are a friendly, mixed group of male and female volunteers. You can work at your own pace and take a break as and when you wish. We meet at 9.30am, normally at Tramway Cottage Car Park, Daisy Bank Road, and are on the hill for approximately 3 hours. Tools are provided by FOLK. For your own safety we ask you to wear stout footwear and bring tough gardening gloves.

The planned dates for work parties for the next 6 months are:

October 2022	Thursday 13 th	Tuesday 18 th	Sunday 23 rd
November 2022	Thursday 10 th	Tuesday 15 th	Sunday 27 th
December 2022	Thursday 8 th	Tuesday 20 th	
January 2023	Thursday 12 th	Tuesday 17 th	Sunday 29 th
February 2023	Thursday 9 th	Tuesday 21 st	Sunday 26 th
March 2023	Thursday 9 th	Tuesday 21 st	Sunday 26 th

For further information you can contact Geoff on 01242 244165 or you can look at the 'Work Party' page on our website (<https://www.leckhamptonhill.org.uk/work-parties/>) or send an email to folk.workparty@gmail.com.

ABOUT FOLK

FOLK is an organisation set up to work with landowners to promote the conservation and management of the ecology, geology and archaeology of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common. We support sustainable recreational and agricultural use of the land. We welcome new members to support and help us in this important work. If you wish to join (either as an individual or as a family) please contact any of the people listed below. ***There is currently no fee for membership.***

Why not have a look at what is new on the FOLK website <http://www.leckhamptonhill.org.uk/> and look us up on Facebook Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common.

Contributions to the FOLK Website are always gratefully received.

Contact: webmaster.leckhamptonhill@gmail.com

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If you have any comments on the Newsletter or would like to contribute an article to the next edition please contact **Martin Wood** on **01242 231230** or send an email to: martinwood360@gmail.com. Articles of around 500 words, plus a photo if you have one, would be most welcome at any time.

Contact FOLK

Mike Donnelly, Chairman: 01242 238790

Geoff Holt, Work Parties: 01242 244165

Malcolm Geddes, Treasurer: 01242 514602

Tony Duffin, Membership: 01242 529240

Martin Wood, Newsletter: 01242 231230

Find the ***Friends of Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common*** on www.leckhamptonhill.org.uk and on Facebook

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