



Friends of Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common

NEWSLETTER

www.leckhamptonhill.org.uk

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Spring 2004

Cotswold AONB Management Plan

In 2002 the Management Plan for Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common was published. Now the proposed text of the Management Plan for the whole of the Cotswolds AONB has been published and was discussed at a Cotswolds AONB Partnership meeting at the end of January 2004.

The Partnership works to:

- Conserve and enhance the Cotswolds AONB;
- Promote sustainable development and appropriate quiet enjoyment;
- Enable provision to be made for recreation where it is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses;
- Promote public awareness and support for the Cotswolds;
- Enhance the relevance of the Cotswolds AONB to all who live and work in and around, or visit, the area.

Like our own Management Plan, the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan "sets clear priorities and will guide us all in exercising our responsibilities and taking actions, wherever possible jointly, to conserve and enhance the future of the Cotswolds AONB".

The Vision

"Our Vision is that the very special nature of the Cotswolds will be conserved to benefit future generations through careful management of essential changes that ensure Cotswold communities stay vibrant with people and organisations committed to conserving and enhancing this inspiring area with its very special physical character and lifestyle bound together by its wonderful limestone."

The Plan is made up of three sections:

Introductory Section

- Introduction
- How the public and stakeholders were involved [in the consultation process]
- Cross-cutting issues and overall management approaches
- What makes the Cotswolds special'.

Section A Natural Characteristics

- Landscape and geology
- Biodiversity
- Historic environment
- Sustainable resources

Section B Activities

- Living and working in the Cotswolds
- Farming and rural land use
- Forestry, woodlands and trees
- Tourism, recreation and access
- Transport
- Planning and development
- Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Taking action

Appendices

The basic structure of each topic section is:

- Overview
- Significant characteristics
- Key Issues
- Aims
- Policies
- Priority actions

For further details:

Website: www.cotswolds.gov.uk

e-mail: aonb@cotswold.gov.uk

Julius Marstrand

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LETTERS

Dear Sir,

I am not local to the area and would be very grateful if you could help me with some advice. I am currently researching a German WW2 POW Camp and during the course of this work I've discovered a connection with the Tuberculosis Isolation Unit. In 1945 the unit was part of the Salterley Grange Estate and it overlooked the Leckhampton Hill.

I would like to obtain information and photographs of Salterley Grange and Leckhampton Hill as they looked circa 1945 then and as they look today. I would be very grateful if you could help with advice in any way.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,
Alison Robertson.

If any reader has any information please reply to
A Robertson
29 Glenarm Crescent
Brant Road
Lincoln
LN5 9TX.
or e-mail alison_robertson@ntlworld.com

Extract of letter received from one of our members

Thank you for the latest and very informative newsletter, which is all the more appreciated for those of us who do not permanently reside in Cheltenham.

Reference to roe deer and muntjac is interesting, as I have seen several either killed or nearby the roadside when journeying to and from Cheltenham/London.

The article 'Beneath the Devil's Chimney' reminds me of the occasion when my parents lived in Rockholme, by the renowned landmark. My father had a vegetable garden at the rear of the premises, with a wooden summerhouse in which he would sit and have his coffee from a small thermos flask. One day a huge boulder rolled off the hill, crossed the vegetable patch and smashed into the summerhouse that collapsed like a pack of cards. Fortunately my father was not inside at the time!

Good wishes to you and all associated with you in FOLK.

Kind regards Major Trevor Smith, London

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

FOLK Work Party Report Winter 2003/4

The past three months have seen probably the busiest and most varied spell of conservation work completed since the formation of FOLK. The organisations involved were Cheltenham Borough Council, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology, Cotswold Voluntary Warden Service and of course FOLK members on their twice monthly work parties. The following schedule shows the work in more detail.

Cheltenham Borough Council – Projects funded and undertaken by CBC:

Clearance of trees and scrub in Salterly Quarry to expose important geological features.
Clearance of scrub from the ramparts of the Hill Fort and control of the expanding rabbit population there. Both scrub and rabbits were damaging this archaeological feature.
Clearance of ash seedlings and scrub on the grassland slopes to the west of Salterly Quarry.
Replacement of the old wooden fence above the Devil's Chimney by a substantial metal safety barrier.
Footpath clearance in Daisybank Fields.

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

Clearance of the bridleway leading from Ashmead via the Lime Kilns up to the top of the escarpment.
Work has been started on clearing blocked and overgrown footpaths leading down from the Gallops below Charlton King's Common to the Cirencester road.

Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology

The top section of the old tramroad (incline 4) and adjoining sidings leading from Limekilns Quarry to the top of the hill have been cleared by a GSIA work party supported by FOLK members. GSIA intend to produce a leaflet about the old tramroads.

Cotswold Voluntary Wardens

CVS provided two work parties that cleared encroaching scrub from the western end of Charlton King's Common to link up glades of existing grassland.
CVS completed a hedge-laying project round the top of a small quarry on the edge of the escarpment to the south of the hill fort.

FOLK

Further clearance of scrub on the south side of Daisybank road to enable additional areas of grassland to be temporarily fenced ready for grazing in early spring.
Litter picking in all the car parks and some FPs on the hill has taken place on several occasions. The amount of litter is a disgrace and both saddens and angers those of us who love Leckhampton Hill.
Site visits on the hill to agree work to be carried out in the coming months and meeting with the local press prior to publicity in the Gloucestershire Echo.

Thank you very much to everyone who contributed to such a successful conservation programme.

Future Work Parties

Midweek Work Parties

Thursday 8 April 2004
Thursday 13 May 2004
Thursday 10 June 2004
Thursday 8 July 2004

Weekend Work Parties

Sunday 25 April 2004
Sunday 23 May 2004
Sunday 27 June 2004
Sunday 25 July 2004

All work parties meet in Tramway Cottage car park, Daisybank Road at 9.30am. We provide the tools – all you need to do is turn up in suitable clothing with stout footwear and gloves.

Allan Wood

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY- ALL WELCOME

FOLK invite you to attend a

Biodiversity Day on the Hill

Wednesday, 19th May 2004

In conjunction with Cotswold AONB and BBC Radio Gloucestershire

See notice boards for further details shortly.

The Industrial Story Of Leckhampton Hill

An informative and informal walk and talk on the industrial archaeology and quarrying of Leckhampton Hill, looking through the period 1800-1927.

Date: Sunday 11th July 2004.
Time: 2 pm.
Starting Point: Tramway Cottage Car Park, Daisybank Road.
Leaders: Ray Wilson and Geoffrey Jenkins.
Distance: Approx. 2 hrs.
Duration: Approx. 2 Miles.
Difficulty: Moderate.

This walk does include some steep inclines and strong footwear is highly recommended.

DRY STONE WALLING COURSES

The dates for the next dry stone walling courses on Leckhampton Hill are as follows:

July 12th and 13th (Weekdays)
October 9th and 10th (Weekend).

Cost Beginners £35 Intermediate £40.

Other dates and locations available throughout Gloucestershire.

**For more details or to apply please contact: Cotswold AONB on 01451 862000
or email: aonb@cotswold.gov.uk**

Conservation of the Industrial Archaeology of Leckhampton Hill

Wherever you walk today on Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common you are likely to encounter the remains of centuries of industrial activity in pursuit of stone and gravel. These range from various bumps and hollows in ground to the towering quarry faces. The initiated will also be able to make out the routes of the tramroads (horse drawn railways) and steep inclines that were constructed long ago in the early part of the 19th century. More obvious is the massive standard gauge railway incline, built in 1924, which runs to the south east of Daisybank car park. This is now a very popular way up the hill and takes you past the concrete bases of the four lime kilns built at the same time.

The geological and biological aspects of the area are rightly acknowledged as being of national importance with the SSSI designation. However, it must not be overlooked that an (as yet) unpublished English Heritage survey (the Monument Protection Programme), has assessed the hill and judged the quarries and the associated transport systems as of national importance (albeit in the lowest category). It is therefore essential to conserve the industrial archaeology of the hill and to provide appropriate interpretation of our industrial heritage to enhance visitors' understanding and consequently their enjoyment of the hill.

The social and industrial history of Leckhampton Hill has been well documented by a former Chairman of the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology, David Bick, in his excellent book *Old Leckhampton (Quarries-Railways-Riots-Devils Chimney)*. GSIA have a long standing interest in the conservation of the industrial archaeology (IA) of Leckhampton Hill and several GSIA work parties were active on the hill in the early 1970s. The Society very much welcomed the recent initiative by Cheltenham Borough Council and FOLK to prepare a Management Plan for the area and it contributed a set of proposals regarding IA.

To support these proposals a complete reassessment of the IA of the area was carried out by the Society and a report published in the GSIA Journal for 2001 (pp. 35-46). Slightly revised proposals from those shown in the Plan were published in the Journal for 2002 (pp 64-66). The report is also available on the GSIA web site at www.gsia.org.uk/leckia.pdf and takes the form of a gazetteer which gives the locations of the major quarries, the seven identified tramroad inclines and the lines of the tramroads 'on the level'. It is accompanied by two maps and David Bick has kindly made available a previously unpublished photograph of 1924 showing the four 70 foot high lime kilns. The picture also shows clearly the small stone building near the lime kilns that is now totally ruinous. This building contained electrical plant such as transformers and switch gear for the works. It is probably worth downloading the article for the picture alone.



The GSIA conservation proposals are really very simple. The lime kiln bases and the old Electrical Plant House should receive simple basic preventive maintenance to prevent further deterioration of these structures. The line of the tramroads and inclines should be cleared of all trees and scrub. The need for clearance is two-fold. Firstly this is good archaeological practice as set out for example in the excellent Gloucestershire County Council Archaeological Service (GCCAS) guide *Archaeology and Farming - A guide to the*

care and management of archaeological sites. On page 8 it advises that "Self-seeded saplings should be removed to prevent developing root systems from invading archaeological Deposits".

Secondly, clearance makes interpretation of the tramroads and incline much easier when their routes are clearly demarcated. Since the tramroads are essentially narrow linear features the actual area to be cleared is very small. However, it does create a 'distinctiveness' for the features without the use of potentially obtrusive notices or other markers. GSIA is aware that stone sleeper blocks with holes to fix the cast iron rails lie buried just below the surface on several stretches of tramroad. Working in conjunction with GCCAS the Society are hoping to expose some of these in a similar manner to what has been achieved by Forest Enterprise for the Bixslade Tramroad in the Forest of Dean.

Clearance of the entire length of Top Incline (which rises from the lime kilns in a south easterly direction to the top of the hill) was carried out by GSIA in February 2002. On Sunday 8 February 2004 a combined FOLK, CBC and GSIA working party had a very successful day clearing the 100 yard level stretch of tramroad leading from the top of Top Incline. Further work is planned for this area in October 2004. GSIA is very grateful to CBC and FOLK for supporting the project.



Finally, there are two stone sleeper blocks, a yard apart and complete with fixing holes, that are already exposed on one of the most popular paths on the hill. Where are they? - answer next time (or download the report!).

Dr. Ray Wilson, Honorary Secretary, Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology
01453 860595 ray.wilson@freeuk.com www.gsia.org.uk
(Contact for advice on obtaining a copy of *Old Leckhampton*)

Your Executive Committee Members are:-

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Andy Gilbert	Tony Meredith
John North	Christine Ryder
Wendy Twist	Allan Wood

Co-opted Sue Barrett and Jack Shepherd
CBC Ex Officio TBA

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

"Pleased To Meet You"

James Blockley

When I first arrived in Cheltenham ten years ago after a period in Asia, I had a place at university, a rucksack and not a lot else. Feeling trapped and a little unsure, I found myself staring at the line of hills surrounding the town with an overwhelming desire to be elevated above the hustle and bustle of my new home. I walked in as straight a line as possible up through strange streets until I reached something that felt familiar – Rich oak and beech woodlands and a natural smell far removed from that of diesel fumes. A short time later, and already feeling more enthusiastic about my recent choices, I emerged onto one of the most beautiful areas of grassland I had ever seen. I sat on the edge with the whole of Cheltenham laid out below me, took a deep breath of clean air, and felt that with the town looking so small and with a hill like this to escape to, my new life was going to be both successful and fruitful. As a dedication on one of the hill's memorial benches says, "Welcome to the world".

A decade on and I have been visiting the site every week for a stroll and a dose of tranquillity. It is only now as the Borough Council officer responsible for the management of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common, that I have a chance to repay the debt and put something back – A chance to ensure that this unique area is protected, and open for generations to come, that it will always do for others as it has done for me.



Left to right: Ellie, James, Wayne & Geoff.

The job of managing the area is just one part of a wide range of duties I perform as Community Parks Officer and is only made possible through the hard work and enthusiasm of two particular groups of people: FOLK, a more passionate and proactive group of volunteers could never be found, and the team I work with, the Community Ranger Service, including Ellie, Wayne and Geoff.

"Working with the community to protect and enhance our green spaces", the rangers are involved in a wide range of environmental and parks-based projects across the borough such as the Schools Wild Garden Initiative and Wildlife Watch, but a certain proportion of the team's time is allotted to tasks on the hill. From attending all the Folk work parties, to leading teams of Community Service Unit workers they all share my enthusiasm for the area and its conservation management. Whilst I too am involved with these activities, my diverse role on the hill also includes co-ordinating the execution of the action plan, mediating between conflicting interests, securing external funding, maintaining communication with the landowner (CBC) and external bodies such as English Nature, DEFRA and the County Council. In addition, I am also charged with ensuring CBC's obligations are met with respect to the SSSI, the Scheduled Ancient Monument and the Countryside and Rights of Way act

Whilst this position can be demanding, it is also a refreshing challenge and one that I am trying to meet to the best of my abilities. But one thing differentiates it from all the other projects I have been involved with: We all want the same thing - We all want the hill to remain open, well managed and salubrious for all. If the associated parties keep working together and effective partnerships continue to be nurtured, we will continue to see improvements on the hill and its safe, effective, sustainable management will be ensured well into the future.

Thank You.

Any questions/ comments on the management of the hill or any other related issues are more than welcome. Please contact me at james.blockley@cheltenham.gov.uk, or at CBC Central Depot, Swindon Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL51 9JZ.

BIRDS OF LECKHAMPTON HILL – BUZZARDS

The hill has been “home” to at least one pair of COMMON BUZZARDS for over 5 years. They have usually managed to breed successfully and raise 2 young in the springtime. Both adult birds will assist in feeding their vociferous offspring and can be seen flying home with small mammals, such as rabbits, voles and fieldmice in talons or beak. After a period of about 7 weeks the youngsters will be fully fledged and will have learned to fly. In the summer the youngsters and their parents can often be seen “quartering” the area as a family, but before the end of summer the offspring will be moving away to seek their own hunting territories and their own mates and new nesting areas. They will not be tolerated to impinge permanently in their parents’ established area.

Gloucestershire’s buzzard population has been re-establishing itself in the recent years after the post-war reductions which were probably due to a combination of persecution, pesticides and dramatic reductions in rabbit population in the myxomatosis years. Unfortunately myxomatosis is now locally rampant and this factor, together with the dramatic reduction in the snail population due to last year’s hill fire, could make 2004 a difficult year for our local buzzards. In hard times the birds will depend more on small reptiles, beetles, snails and even worms and may also go for small birds.

Buzzards and Kestrels are the only birds of prey which can be seen hovering whilst searching for food. However, buzzards hover less frequently than the much smaller kestrel and because of their size they are much more dependent upon an updraught of wind over the Cotswold Edge to achieve it. Their sharp eyes can detect the movement of a beetle even when “quartering” the escarpment edge.

The Wingspan of the buzzard is between 110 and 132 centimetres. From underneath their colour, though variable, is usually brown along the forward edge, then pale grey to white towards the trailing edge which has a black terminal line. The Wingtips are black with long individual feathers which look like “fingers”. The tail is fan-shaped which means that even as a silhouette one should be able to distinguish a buzzard from a Kite which has a forked tail. Even so in 2003 one of the Leckhampton buzzards lost several central tail feathers which may have confused some observers into regular sighting of Red Kite. So far the latter species has only occasionally been seen passing through, except in Spring 1998 when two Red Kites stayed for one month in the vicinity of Pen Hill, Colesbourne.

There is something very appealing about our local buzzards, not simply in their “quartering” or soaring on summer thermals. But also in their distinctive “mewing” calls. Their presence is an indication of the health of our very own SSSI.

Tony Meredith

FOLK FUNDRAISING

We have been successful in the Cheltenham Borough Council Small Grants for Voluntary Organisations allocation for 2003-2004 and we have been awarded £528.73 to spend on display boards, which we intend to loan to local schools, libraries and supermarkets, to highlight the works being undertaken by FOLK, in an effort to encourage more people to join us.

Also in this connection, we have received £70 from The Parish Council of Leckhampton with Warden Hill and £50 from Shurdington Parish Council, towards the purchase of a laminator and associated items.

We extend our sincere thanks to all the Councils for their continued support.

You will see from the article on the back page, that we have been fortunate in securing sponsorship from Pegasus Retirement Homes for the production of the FOLK Newsletter in 2004. We are sure everyone who receives our Newsletter will appreciate the benefits that such sponsorship will achieve, and accordingly we thank their management team for their support in promoting the conservation work carried out by FOLK, in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council.

Anne North – Treasurer

What have the cows been up to whilst at home?

The cattle have now been back at home for three months. So what has happened during this time?

The calves that were born, were taken away from their mothers for weaning, a week after returning home. They have been inside during this time, getting used to solid food and eating all the hay they can. They have also had the delight of being put on a head collar and lead around the yard to get them used to being handled (very useful when the vet comes to pay a visit).

The calves look sweet out in the field but when you start to handle them you find out what the temperament is really like. We arranged at the beginning of January for the two male calves to be dehorned and castrated by the vet. The oldest calf had other ideas about having a halter on, when we got in the pen and approached him. He ran round and kicked out with his back legs (bruises still evident six weeks later). The vet gave him a sedative because he was so fired up. This was only partially successful. Even the vet was surprised, as the dose was big enough to knock out an adult cow. It made him drowsy enough though to complete the castration and dehorning without anyone getting seriously injured. (Needless to say this calf has now left our herd for other pastures.) The youngest calf was a complete contrast, he behaved so well that the job was over and done in a few minutes.

The cows were introduced to a suitable Dexter bull, which we hired from Stratford upon Avon. He was of a very quiet disposition and settled in quickly to our daily routine. Hopefully, after running with the cows for three months, all five are now in calf, and the bull has returned to his home farm. The calves (one heifer and one steer) will be re-introduced into the herd before grazing on the Common recommences, probably towards the end of March.

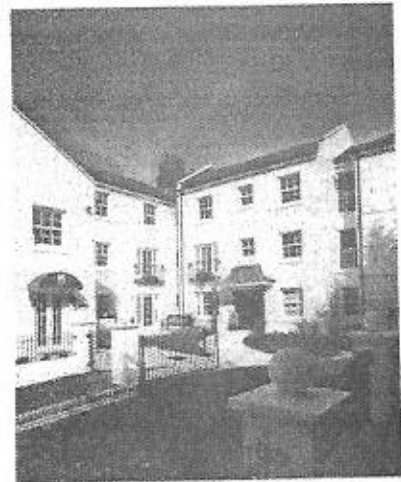
Annette and Anne North

Retire in Style at Jubilee Court, Cheltenham

Greatly prolonged life expectancy means that retired people can look forward to a long run of golden years, with some people's retirement lasting even longer than the decades spent working!

Making the most of those years, however, has much to do with remaining independent, active and involved – physical and mental fitness, and involvement in the community being the key to a long and happy retirement.

Pegasus Retirement Homes, sponsors of the FOLK newsletters in 2004, has a wide experience of issues surrounding active retirement. Kerry Noyes-Lewis from Jubilee Court on Commercial Street, Cheltenham said: "Retired people have traditionally 'exiled' themselves in retirement by moving to bungalows or cottages either in the middle of the countryside or by the sea. These may be places they have always dreamed of living, but in reality the dream cottage may prove to be a prison, isolated from family and friends built up over a lifetime."



"A much more sensible alternative is to choose a place to live in retirement that will suit your *real* needs for now and the future. That means a place where you can remain actively involved in the community you know, whether in a smaller house, a manageable flat or a purpose-built retirement apartment, in an area where there is a supportive network of friends, family and useful organizations."

Making the decision to move into a purpose built retirement development can seem a daunting prospect for many retired people but owning a Pegasus apartment can open the door to a whole world of opportunity. Owners are free from many of the responsibilities of having to look after existing homes and gardens.

Living in a Pegasus development can offer peace of mind to retired people and their families due to the confidence inspiring features such as a visiting Estate Manager and state of the art security with 24 hour central emergency control.

The social aspect of retired life is also very important. Jubilee Court has a communal Owners' Lounge, offering the perfect location to host informal parties, impress old friends and meet new ones. The development is set in landscaped and maintained gardens and the development was designed to blend in with the local vernacular of the surrounding town houses.

Jubilee Court has a total of 26 one and two bedroom private apartments, each one featuring doors that are wider for access, illuminated switches, and sockets placed at a height that requires no bending, quality fitted kitchens include all main appliances. The development also features a lift to all floors, Visitors' Suite and recharging area for battery operated cars. Jubilee Court has everything to make active retirement elegant, secure and hassle free.

The development is open daily from 10.30am to 4.30pm. For more information or to view the show apartment please call Kerry Noyes-Lewis, Development Sales Manager, on 01242 239933.

Cheltenham itself has no shortage of clubs and leisure centres, offering everything from swimming, yoga, pilates and tai chi to a very English game of croquet – a sport that is growing in popularity and currently being heralded as the new bowls! The croquet season runs from Spring until the middle of October, but Cheltenham Croquet Club on Old Bath Road is always happy to speak to prospective new players, and can be reached on 01242 242318.

Retired people wanting to maintain a dynamic lifestyle *and* put something back into the community could do no better than take a trip to their local volunteering bureau. Here, you will find countless opportunities to get involved in local community activities, with many and varied voluntary groups and organisations to keep you on your toes.



For advice on volunteering opportunities in Cheltenham, contact the National Centre for Volunteering on 020 7520 8900.

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