



# LECKHAMPTON

## GREEN LAND

### ACTION GROUP

NEWSLETTER 28

FEBRUARY 2007

#### **Annual General Meeting – 17 March @ 7-45p.m.**

Tony Meredith will talk about birdlife in the Leckhampton area – including nearby territory such as Leckhampton Hill.

#### **Planning News (Feb 2007)**

**RSS** . We now know when the Enquiry in Public (EiP) into the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) will be considering the draft RSS proposals for the Cheltenham and Gloucester areas - it will be on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and May 23<sup>rd</sup> at Exeter. This Enquiry is of vital importance for us, as the Inspectors' recommendations (due late Autumn) are unlikely to be changed much by the Government Minister (whoever it is by then) who will have the final say, probably early in 2008. The outcome will largely determine all planning and building in our area for the next 20 years, though it will be periodically reviewed.

Meanwhile all the representations made to the Inspectors have been listed and their contents (or summaries) put onto a web site [www.southwesteip.co.uk](http://www.southwesteip.co.uk) which is available for anyone to read. Perusing this, it becomes clear what a tremendous job our members did last summer in responding to the consultation. Something like three quarters of all the representations in this web site about the proposals for the Cheltenham Area were from LEGLAG members - over 100 are listed . And that total doesn't include the hundreds of submissions that were not sent in via computer, so the enquiry staff just listed the names. Re-reading some of these submissions, I feel sure that the three Inspectors (who have to read them all!) will be very impressed by the strength of feeling expressed in many of these submissions, as well as the cogent arguments supplied by many others.

We have also had valuable support from various Parish Councils, notably Leckhampton, Shurdington, and Up Hatherley. And CPRE (Campaign to protect Rural England) also support us.

But other representations on the web are from potential developers, and they of course take a different view, so we shall have to argue our case strongly at the Enquiry! Luckily we have (in effect) been given two seats at the table (out of 25), one seat for LEGLAG itself (Kit Brauholtz will probably represent us there), and also a seat for Ken Pollock, our other surviving founding member. Probably at least one other Committee member will also be there in support, but not at the table.

Another very important participant at the Enquiry will be Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC). And CBC have been carrying out vital preliminary work, by getting some consultants to have another look at what changes to the Green Belt would be the best. How should the Green Belt be changed in order to allow it to continue to do its job, but also allow the required amount of extra

development to take place in the Greater Cheltenham Area? (i.e. including parts of Tewkesbury Borough). The consultants were asked to get input from Stakeholders; and LEGLAG responded in December by recommending inclusion of the Leckhampton land in the Green Belt. In January the consultants reported their interim findings, saying that the best site for an urban extension in the present Green Belt would be North or North West of Cheltenham (we agree), but also that they had not found a good case for including the Leckhampton Land in the Green Belt. LEGLAG responded with a number of further arguments in favour of including the land in the Green Belt that they might not have considered. The consultants' final report is due any day now..(MAYBE WE CAN PUT SOMETHING IN) CBC are also doing other important preliminary work for the Enquiry, and we expect them to agree with us that Leckhampton should NOT be marked out for development, even if our land is not included in the Green Belt.

**Tewkesbury** There is a High Court case due to be heard soon which may affect things. Wimpey are suing Tewkesbury because they didn't allocate land North of Bishop's Cleeve (Homelands Farm) for development in their Local Plan, although the Inspector had said they should. If Wimpey win, it would reduce the pressure on Tewkesbury to develop on our land. If Tewkesbury win (they claim the land is too near the Cotswold escarpment) it would strengthen our case for protection, because our land is even nearer the Escarpment! (There is a strong Bishop's Cleeve lobby on Tewkesbury Borough Council which is against building at Homelands Farm and in favour of putting it into the Green Belt. That is why Tewkesbury decided to build here - in Shurdington - rather than at Homelands Farm! The Shurdington Councillor is very isolated.)

**Oak House, Brizen Lane.** We remain confident of winning the war, but we lost a minor skirmish last week, when the Borough Council Planning Committee allowed an application to build a second house in a plot at the very bottom of Brizen Lane, at Oak House. A previous resident had already reduced the attractive oak which once stood at the bottom of the garden (near the Cheltenham Circular Footpath) to a deformed stump: now the present owner has got permission to build a second home in his garden. This estate was intrusive enough before (a bad planning decision by Nicholas Ridley) - but if this development sets a trend it will become a nightmare!

### **Highlights from Wildlife Sightings for the last 5 months of 2006**

#### **AUGUST**

A **Little Owl** was seen in the orchard near Merlin Way and a flock of 20-25 **Greenfinches** near Robinswood Cottage. A family of **Weasels** was seen crossing Kidnappers Lane.

#### **SEPTEMBER**

A **Red-Legged Partridge** appeared in a garden in Charlton Lane. A group of 4 **Meadow Pipits** was seen near Little Vatch and 27 species were spotted in one day in the LEGLAG area.

#### **OCTOBER**

In the LEGLAG area several **Green Woodpeckers** appeared in one morning plus, a **Sparrowhawk**, **Mistle Thrush**, **Song Thrush** and a **Pied Wagtail**. **House**

**Sparrows** had reappeared in the hedgerow bordering Merlin Way. They were driven away by the hedge trimming at Burrows.

## **NOVEMBER**

2 **Goldcrests** were seen at Leckhampton Farm and 2 more at Little Vatch. Unfortunately, only 1 **Redwing** was sighted in the area but there have been small flocks in the Crippetts. Please contact me if you have seen any. **Goldfinches** appeared in the old orchard near Merlin Way and a **Greater-Spotted Woodpecker** near Hatherley Brook.

## **DECEMBER**

At least 8 **Song Thrushes** were visible or audible across the LEGLAG area in a single morning.

2 **Bullfinches** appeared in the allotments near the A46. (These allotments provide a habitat for **Goldfinches** and **Greenfinches** also). We had **Tawny Owls** calling in the copse next to us in Crippetts Lane very late one night.

If more specific information is required on the wildlife seen, please contact me.

My thanks to those people who have contributed over this period, especially Tony and Frances Meredith. If anyone has any information on wildlife seen in the LEGLAG and surrounding area, could they please contact me.  
(Steve Gladstone)

### **Membership.**

With the enormous number of new members this year, some acknowledgements of receipt of subscriptions have not been sent out. Please be reassured that if you receive this newsletter you are on our books and unless a subscription reminder is enclosed, you are paid up to at least this March. You can check through me if you have any doubts.

(Don Wilson)