

Sunday, July 4, 2004, 00:00 by Alan Deidun

Lands Department and land ownership

Aaron Vella's letter, 'Trespassers' (June 27), draws the limelight to another hot potato: public access to the countryside. Despite him being one of the very few hunters who own their own parcel of land, the vast majority of hunters are squatters who do not.

I have called on the Lands Department ad nauseam to unravel this problem once and for all by fixing authorised signs on site (e.g., along the entire Dingli Cliffs) stating land ownership for all to see. Landowners would be responsible and legally liable for the upkeep of these signs.

The whole Ras il-Pellegrin hillside to the left of Gnejna is cordoned off to the public. Can anyway from the Lands Department verify the status of this claim? To date, the Lands Department have been conspicuous by their taciturn stance.

Mr Vella claims that hunters are the only ones to protect and embellish the countryside. Does he acknowledge the vast stretches of garigue smothered by hunting hides and debris dumped for hunting purposes or the myriad of alien Eucalyptus and Acacia trees planted by hunters?

One only hopes that the momentum for setting up the first ramblers' association in Malta does not fizzle away (contact Lino Bugeja).