

# The Friends of Troopers Hill



Summer 2008



I'm very pleased to welcome a new contributor to the Hill this edition. Julian Thomas, who many of you will have already met as he is the Parkie we share with Eastwood Farm and Callington Road, has agreed to share some of his thoughts and observations on nature and life with us. You can read his first contribution inside. Jules has already been a regular contributor to the Forum, so many of us are already familiar with his unique style!

You may have noticed that the original bench on the top of the Hill has recently been repainted. Such is the commitment of Bristol Parks Department, that three of the Community Parks Managers (John Threadgold, Caroline Hollies and Claire Adams) decided to do it in person and turned up complete with paint and brushes to perform the task. Not many Local Nature Reserves get to experience the CPMs "Hands-on" approach.

We were very sorry lately to hear of the death of Reg Gill at the ripe old age of 96. Reg has lived in the Riverside Nursing Home for some time and has been a passionate supporter of Friends of Troopers Hill since our inception. He phoned to talk to us regularly, was kind enough to send your editor compliments about "The Hill" and immensely enjoyed a slide show that we put on in the nursing home. A thoroughly nice man whom we shall miss. Our condolences go out to his family and friends.

Your editor was recently up very early one morning at the beginning of May to go up on the Hill and record the Dawn Chorus. You can hear this one hour recording on our website, or download it if you wish to. If you can't access the Internet, but would like to have a copy, we have CDs available at a cost of £1 each. These will be made to order, so if you want one, please contact Susan—details in the contacts section.

You may have noticed that the Green Flag is finally flying at the corner of Troopers Hill Road and Green-down. The judging for this year's Green Flag award took place in the last week of May. Fingers crossed for a successful outcome for Troopers Hill again this year. Several other Bristol locations are being put forward as well this year, but it is important to realise that the award is not a competition between these sites. We could all win an award, or we could all not win an award. Hopefully the former will be the case.

## Music on the Hill



It's that time of year again and Friends are making preparations for this year's concert on Saturday 28th

June at 6 pm. We have invited back the South Gloucestershire Youth Jazz Orchestra (SoGYJO) after we had to cancel them last year because of bad weather. So, fingers crossed for the sunshine this year. The concert is completely free and we encourage you to bring the family, picnics, blankets or cushions to sit on, but please — do not bring disposable barbecues as they damage our rare grasses.

## Trooping the Hill

Also on Saturday 28th June, join us at 3pm by the chimney and storyteller Martin Maudsley with Ruth Worsley of Avon Wildlife Trust, will take us on a storytelling adventure to uncover the secrets of Troopers Hill!

This interactive performance will whisk us away on a journey through time as we share stories, music and song inspired by Troopers Hill. Our adventure will end in a fantastic Strawberry Feast!

Sally Oldfield and Friends of Troopers Hill will be working with St Aidans Scouts throughout June to develop the performance. If you would like to come along, then please Contact Us.



If you'd like to talk to us about any issues raised in this newsletter, please contact:

**Susan Acton-Campbell** (Chair), Tel. **0117 947 5037** .

**Sally Oldfield** (Bristol Council Nature in the City) ,  
Tel. **0117 922 4429**

You can also write to us at: **3, Corkers Hill, St. George, Bristol, BS5 8DT**

Email:

[chair@troopers-hill.org.uk](mailto:chair@troopers-hill.org.uk) or  
[Sally.oldfield@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:Sally.oldfield@bristol.gov.uk)

Or go to the online forum at:

<http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/forum.html>

## Do You Recognise Anybody?



**We've** recently been given the above photograph. It is thought to be a photo taken at a party for the 1953 Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. It is some of the congregation from the Crews Hole Chapel at the bottom of Troopers Hill Road. This, of course, has now been converted into flats. The location is thought to be where there are now several garages, again near the bottom

of Troopers Hill Road. It has certainly changed considerably!

**We** have managed to identify a few of the people in the photo, but would like to find out who the others are, so that we can post it in the "history" section on our website.

**If** you know any of the names, or anything about the photo itself, please do get in touch with us.

### Message in a Bottle

**Message** in a bottle is a simple scheme which involves a small canister, an information form and two stickers which are given to people with medical problems or allergies. They fill in the form with their medical details, and the telephone number of who to call if they are ill, particularly if they have a pet, who will need looking after. They put the form and a copy of their repeat prescriptions into the canister and put the canister in the door of their fridge, where it is easy to find and protected from fire. One sticker is put on the outside of the fridge door and the other on the inside of the front door. Ambulance Crews and

GP's who do out of hour visits, are part of this scheme and they will look out for the stickers.

**This** is a national scheme that has been running in Bristol Primary Care Trust (PCT) since 2005. In that time over 10,000 bottles have been given out. Elizabeth Williams from Bristol PCT recently said "Message in a bottle has been very successful. NHS staff find the information useful and people on medication or with an allergy find it reassuring. The scheme has saved lives".

**Another** batch of bottles has just been received, so lots are available. If you would like a bottle for your fridge ask your Community Nurse, or contact David Manning on 0117 900 2266. He will gladly put a bottle in the post. Or you can email him on [david.manning@bristolpct.nhs.uk](mailto:david.manning@bristolpct.nhs.uk).

## A Spring Clean for Troopers Hill

Our regular work parties continue to be well attended with some requiring rather more courage and flexibility than others! March saw a beautiful morning and a great turnout to firstly spread mulch on the Greendown hedge and then clear bramble that was choking the broom on a southern slope on the lower Hill. The hedge had been pruned at an earlier outing to encourage it to spread. The mulch will help retain moisture during the summer months. Broom, as you will know, is one of the unique aspects of Troopers Hill as it the only place you will find it growing wild in Bristol.



Mulch ado about something (ouch!)



The Challenges of Work Parties!

In April, work was carried out to remove Holm Oak saplings from the steep slopes above the Crews Hole Road nursery. As you can see, this was quite a tricky challenge and hats off to the volunteers and BCS staff who clambered down the precipice to cut the saplings and remove bramble and rubbish. Amongst other things, 2 shopping trolleys, 2 prams, 1 kiddie's tricycle, 1 metal dustbin, 2 car wheels and 2 wheelie suitcases, were discovered! As it was already the bird nesting season, dense areas of bramble likely to house nests were avoided. This is a major consideration for any work carried out on the Hill. Summer work tends to be mainly clearing saplings in fairly open areas or repairing fences, path and steps.

On the subject of steps, we have had two young volunteers from John Cabot Academy working with us for their Duke of Edinburgh award. They have been building some new steps on the slope down through the woods from one of the red benches on Troopers Hill Field. Here you can see them hard at work. This is not an official path, but it is a lovely short cut through the woods, down to the lower path from Lamb Hill. Whilst working on the steps one Saturday, the lads spotted a deer, so the path has been unofficially nicknamed the DoE path!



Drew and Chris working on the new steps — with help from Mitchell

# Jules's Diary

Hello.

I've been asked by Kit to contribute a few words (max 300) to the Friend's Newsletters, and to be positive (so I'll continue to include the 'r').

I'll begin by introducing myself and the rest of the Team. A photo of us can be found on the website (*And also here — Ed*), there's been a change in that Vernon has passed on to pastures new and is now running his own team. I'm the one on the left and Dave is the guv'nor, Richard is the 'Parkie' at St George, the missing one is Andy, the green-keeper at St George Park. And we're supplemented by John the Tractor. Despite Rob's erroneous description of us as "the Park's Contractors" we all work directly for Bristol City Council and have done so for some time. (I'm still thought of as the new boy and this May I clocked up 21 years of working in the City's parks!)



Julian, Steve, Dave (team leader), Vernon, Richard, Keith & Charlie

We cover a fair amount of East Bristol: from the Kingsway and Dundridge Playing Fields to Callington Road, and St George Park and the Netham to Arnos Park so if you're travelling within this area and you see some grass, well we probably have to cut it!

I'm principally responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of The Hill, Eastwood Farm LNR and Callington Road NR. Three very different Nature Parks and all well worth a visit, so I divide my time between these parks. Of course, for the winter works on the Hill I'm joined by the others. We've made some positive changes over the past two winters and look forward to further reclamation in the years to come.

Not a bad job, on the sunnier days! So if you hear a strimmer or see someone working on the Hill or emptying the bins — it's probably me.

Cheers,

Jules.

## Dates for Your Diary

**Sundays 8th and 29th June :** 10 am—11.30. Tai Chi on the Hill. *Join the Bristol School of Tai Chi for some gentle exercise for all ages. No experience necessary. Contact Susan Acton — Campbell to book your place.*

**Wednesday 25th June:** Evening Work Party. 7 pm. *Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown.*

**Saturday 28th June:** Trooping on the Hill (3 pm) and **Music on the Hill** (6 pm). *In the afternoon a troop of local children will lead us on a journey around Troopers Hill and through time. Then from 6pm a summer evening of music on Troopers Hill, provided by the South Gloucestershire Youth Jazz Orchestra (SoGYJO). Don't forget: bring a picnic! Please do not bring disposable BBQs.*

**Saturday 5th July:** Work Party. 10 am until midday. *Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown.*

**Thursday 10th July:** 7.15pm. Meeting . Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Bryant's Hill. *All are welcome. We need your thoughts.*

**Thursday 17th July:** Evening work party. As 25 June.

**Sunday 20th July:** Tai Chi on the hill. 10am—11.30am. *Join the Bristol school of Tai Chi for some gentle exercise for all ages. No experience necessary, but book your place with Susan.*

**Saturday 2nd August:** Work Party. 10 am until midday. *Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown.*

**Saturday 9th August:** Family Fun Picnic and Bugs & Beesties Walk. 4.00pm. *Fun for all the family. Rupert Higgins will lead the hunt for some of the Hill's smaller inhabitants.*

**Sunday 10th August:** Tai Chi on the Hill. As 20th July.

**Tuesday 19th August:** 7.15pm. Meeting . Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Bryant's Hill. *All are welcome. We need your thoughts.*

**Thursday 21st Aug:** Evening Work Party. As 25 June

**Wednesday 1st October:** Meeting. As 10th July.

**Saturday 4th October: Work Party.** As 5th July.

**Sunday 12th October: Family Fun Dog Show.** 2pm on Troopers Hill Field. *A fun event on Troopers Hill Field that we hope all local dogs and dog owners will want to attend. For dogs of all shapes and sizes. Just come along.*

## Nature in the City Events.

Contact Sally Oldfield for further details.

**Friday 25th July:** 10.30 am. Troopers Hill. Through the seasons walk. *The third of four short and relaxed guided walks introducing the history and wildlife of the hill.*

**Sunday 5th October.** Avon Valley Walk. 10.00am—4pm. *A guided walk through Conham, Dundridge Park, Troopers Hill, St Anne's Woods, Nightingale Valley & Eastwood Farm finishing at Beeses Bar & Tea Rooms. Meet at Conham car-park. Bring a packed lunch. You may like to finish your walk with refreshments at Beeses Tea Gardens.*

**Thursday 16th October.** Owl Prowl. 7pm—9pm. *Join Ian McGuire on an exciting night-time hunt for owls.*

**Friday 31st October:** 10.30 am. Troopers Hill. Through the seasons walk. *The fourth of four short and relaxed guided walks introducing the history and wildlife of the hill.*