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# The Friends of Troopers Hill

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Autumn 2010



For the fourth year running, Troopers Hill has been awarded a "Green Flag". That's great news for us as it means that Bristol Parks (with our help) are doing the right things to preserve the nature of Troopers Hill. In fact, to quote from the judges' report:

*"Plant and fauna conservation is well covered by detailed surveys which are used as a working guide to the maintenance. Indeed conservation issues drive much of the work on the site."* Forgive us if we give ourselves a little bit of a pat on the back, because they went on to say: *"The 'friends are in some ways the 'crown' in the management of the site. They are a very positive, strong and hard working group of enthusiasts, always looking for areas of positive improvements and organisation of specific special events to increase the use and enjoyment of the Nature Reserve."* We couldn't have put our *raison d'être* better ourselves!

All of that said, it is inevitable that over time a group's numbers drop as people move away or become involved in other things — like family. We still have over 200 members who like to receive the newsletter and come along to events. We have to confess that we could do with more of your help though. We are not looking for people to turn up every to work-party or every meeting, but the key to success is to have enough people who come along once or twice a year to join in. Our youngest, regular volunteer (Oscar) is only 9 years old. So, how about it folks? Come and help us carry out the maintenance on the Hill that has to be done manually. If you can spare an hour or so when we have events, it is always a help to have volunteers to put up gazebos (or take them down again) and give people information at our displays. The more diverse opinions we have at meetings the better — we think we know what you would like, but the more people that come along and tell us, the more likely we are to be organising events that *you* really want to enjoy.

Time is running out for you to take photos to enter our competition. Remember, they can be of any event on Troopers Hill. In October we have both the kite event, organised by Gynormous Rawkus on 3rd October, and our own Family Fun Dog Show on 10th October. Both of those should give you plenty of photographic opportunity. We look forward to seeing your entries.

## An Important letter from Bristol Parks.

I am writing to ensure that you are aware of the Area Green Space Plan consultation process that is currently in progress up to 29th October. Area Green Space Plans set out a range of ideas about how our green spaces can be improved, where facilities and different types of space might be provided and in some cases where green space might no longer be needed.

These are important documents for anyone that has an interest in parks, uses one or would like to but don't currently. They are certainly important documents for people that are committed enough to their park that they have become a member of a park group or similar.

We have obviously triggered a great deal of interest in the potential open space disposals set out in Area Green Space Plans and I can assure you that is welcome. However, I am keen to ensure that park group members respond to the investment ideas we have set out - the majority of which have been put forward by members of your community. Giving us feedback on these might make it easier to take some good suggestions forward from here.

You can see the plans at: [www.bristol.gov.uk/agsp](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/agsp) and there are also copies at all libraries. You can respond online or by completing a questionnaire that can be downloaded from the website or which I can send you by post. You can also simply email a comment to [park.strategy@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:park.strategy@bristol.gov.uk).

Many thanks and best wishes,  
Richard Fletcher  
Area Green Space Plan Project Manager  
Neighbourhoods  
Colston 33  
Colston Ave  
Bristol, BS1 4UA  
Tel: 0117 922 3896

# Music on the Hill 2010

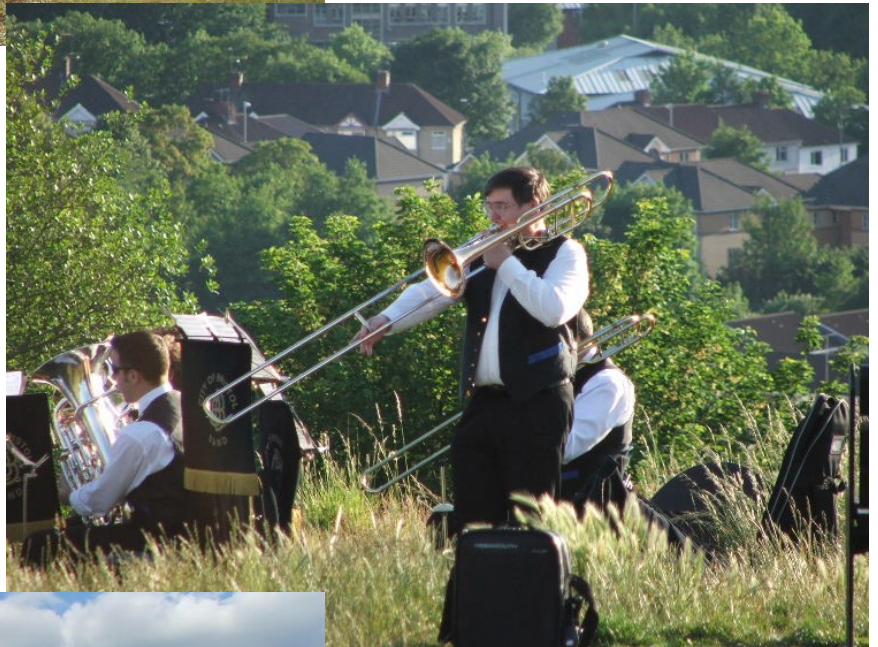


Despite a dubious forecast, the weather gods smiled on us for our fourth open air concert on Troopers Hill. Saturday 19th June saw the City of Bristol Brass Band perform to a crowd of around 200 people.

The skies cleared and even the wind eventually died down in time for an audience of all ages to enjoy the sunshine and picnics, which produced a great family atmosphere.

The band serenaded us with some terrific music which set off a perfect evening wonderfully.

Many of the band were



"blown away" by the magnificent location and confided that they had never been to Troopers Hill before, but were definitely going to come back.



Thanks are due to *Bristol City Council's Community Festival and Event Fund* who subsidised this year's event.

## Kite Making & Flying on Troopers Hill

Sunday, 3rd October 12 to 3pm

Organised by [Gynormous Rawkus](#) as part of *Playful Picnics* which is a series of free art workshops in parks across Bristol.



Join us on Troopers Hill to make kites, decorate them and then fly them! We can (almost) guarantee some wind!

*(Editor's Note: This event is in addition to our own organised events and does not appear in our events leaflet.)*

## Works on Troopers Hill Road

Work is planned for mid October to remove some of the earth that has been falling from the Hill onto Troopers Hill Rd. This will also involve removing sections of the fence where soil has built up behind it. The aim is to reduce the risk of the fence collapsing and the soil falling onto the road in a large heap. Some vegetation removal will be necessary to expose the soil.

This work will need traffic management, either traffic lights or stop-go boards but they will probably only need to be in place while the works are in progress and not overnight. It is unfortunate that this will be happening while Conham Hill is closed and Troopers Hill Rd is likely to be busier, but it has to be done outside the bird nesting season and with the risk of a major soil fall we would not want it to be delayed by a year which is the only other option.

There is also a need for some tree management works to be done in the area to remove dead or diseased trees, cut short, where appropriate, other trees so they regrow (coppice) and take lower branches off other specific trees. This will also reduce

the risk of tree branches being hit by large vehicles. This work has been recommended by Bristol Parks tree officers. When we have raised the problem of low branches before, we have always been told that there is no money because removal of dead and dying branches or trees in parks takes priority in Health & Safety terms. The cost of the traffic management needed has been one of the factors.

There is obviously an opportunity to get this work done more cheaply by using the traffic management that will be in place for the soil works. Friends of Troopers Hill have therefore applied to the Neighbourhood Partnership for funding for the tree works and this will be considered at the next Partnership meeting on 13 September. If the application is successful the tree works will be carried out at the same time as the other works.

## The Friends of Troopers Hill Family Fun Dog Show



Sunday 10th October — Troopers Hill Field

Judging starts 2 pm

All classes free

Prizes & Rosettes given up to 3rd place

Come and compete in our Fun Scurry

Take the Water Retrieval Challenge!

This event encourages responsible dog ownership. Please keep your dog on a lead when not competing and clean up after them. You are responsible for your pet at all times

Classes:

- 1 Cutest Puppy
- 2 Prettiest Bitch
- 3 Most Handsome Dog
- 4 Best Child Handler (under 12)
- 5 Waggiest Tail
- 6 Best Trick
- 7 Best Rescued Dog or Bitch
- 8 Best Movement
- 9 Best Dog Fancy Dress
- 10 Dog the Judges Most Want to Take Home



For further information, call Julie on 0117 947 7353 or email [friends@troopers-hill.org.uk](mailto:friends@troopers-hill.org.uk)



Individual dogs may only be entered for a total of 4 classes

Please Note - There is NO on-site parking



This event is run by Friends of Troopers Hill and Bristol Parks with support from HEART pet rescue. Sponsored by Bristol City Council through their Community Festival and Event Fund. Thanks to Lucas Vets for sponsoring the judging.

Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve  
Green Flag Award Winner 2007/8,  
2008/9, 2009/10 & 2010/2011  
[www.troopers-hill.org.uk](http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk)



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## ABC of Troopers Hill

**G** is for Grass

The grassland on Troopers Hill is unique in the city. The acid soil provides the growing conditions preferred by certain grasses, some of which have wonderful names. Some of my favourites are Wavy Hair-grass, Sheep's Fescue, and Yorkshire Fog.

Grasses belong to a group of flowering plants known as Monocotyledons. The group is characterized by the veins in the leaves running parallel to each other (lilies, onions), distinguishing them from the other main group, Dicotyledons, whose leaves display branching veins.

Troopers Hill grass provides a home to three types of grasshopper, including the Mottled Grasshopper which is rarely found in Bristol, as well as the Meadow Grasshopper and the Field Grasshopper. Among the other insects living in the grass are three kinds of bush cricket – the Conehead, the Speckled Bush Cricket and the Dark Bush Cricket. By the way, you can tell a cricket from a grasshopper by their antennae - the cricket's antennae are long, while grasshoppers have short stubby antennae.

*Bryn Frialen*

## Old Mineshaft Repairs Started

Work has now started on excavating and subsequently sealing the hollow on Troopers Hill, formerly known as the "[Bomb Crater](#)".

The shallow dip, which overlooks Sally's Glade, was originally thought to have been caused by a bomb dropped during the war as it was in line with bombs known to have fallen on the allotments. The area was a major target because of Butler's Tar Works, at the bottom of the Hill.

However, it now seems likely that it is actually being caused by the settlement or collapse of an old mine shaft. The shaft may also coincide with the path of a later, horizontal fireclay mine tunnel that also ran under Troopers Hill. The dip may have been gradually sinking lower for many years but was only noticed earlier this year when Friends observed that an area in the middle had suddenly dropped. This area has since sunk even further.

The Coal Board has accepted ownership of the problem, which means they will pay for the remedial work now being carried out.

The repair will involve removing the ground on top of the dip, down to the level of in-fill remaining underneath. A cap of about 400mm of concrete will then be put on the hole and the soil replaced. We will not know how long the work will take until the initial excavation has been carried out.

## Friends of Troopers Hill: Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 28th September: **Meeting**.

7.15pm, Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road. *Come along and share your views on our Local Nature Reserve.*

Saturday October 2nd: **Work Party**. 10 am—midday. Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown. *Come along and help us look after Troopers Hill.*

Sunday 10th October: **Family Fun Dog Show**. 2pm on Troopers Hill Field, Malvern Road. *Bring your pet along to join in the fun of our third dog show. As usual, all classes are free (limit 4 classes per dog). Lots of fun games for owners as well as their pets. All dogs welcome but must be kept on a lead. You are responsible for your pet's behaviour.*

Saturday November 6th: **Work Party**. As October 2nd.

Sunday 7th November: 10.30am, **Fungi Foray**. *Join expert Justin Smith in a hunt for mushrooms and toadstools on Troopers Hill. This is a guided walk and booking is essential. See contacts for booking details.*

Tuesday 9th November: **Meeting**. As 28th September.

Saturday December 4th: **Work Party**. As October 2nd.

Sunday December 5th: **Slide Show Review of 2010**. 3pm—4.30. Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road. See what we have been up to on Troopers Hill throughout the year followed by our AGM.

## Contacts

For the latest news and updates, phone our  
**Information line: 0753 161 5983**

If you'd like to talk to us, please contact:  
**Susan Acton-Campbell** (Chair),  
Tel. **0117 947 5037**

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

[friends@troopers-hill.org.uk](mailto:friends@troopers-hill.org.uk)

Or go to the online forum at:  
<http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/forum.html>

To book a place on an event,  
Phone Judith: 0117 955 9819 Or email:  
[events2010@troopers-hill.org.uk](mailto:events2010@troopers-hill.org.uk)  
To report incidents on Troopers Hill, phone Bristol  
Parks: 0117 922 3719  
Report criminal activity to the police on 999  
or

Police local beat manager, Pete Crawford, can be contacted on 07919628304

[www.troopers-hill.org.uk](http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk)