## The Friends of Troopers Hill



Despite the rather indifferent weather this year, it has been a very successful summer for Friends of Troopers Hill. Music on the Hill was extremely popular, with many people coming along to enjoy the music provided by The Fantasy Orchestra. Our Bugs and Beasties event was also well-attended and being

one of the better days weather-wise, Troopers Hill was besieged by more people than we have ever seen on the Hill to watch the evening balloon ascent at the Bristol Balloon Fiesta (see more inside). The only shame was that the heavily used Portaloo that Friends sponsor for this event produced very little thanks in the form of donations. It is an expense we will have to reconsider for future events.



We also tried a couple of Sunday afternoon work parties to gauge their appeal. They seem to have been quite a popular idea, with a total of 17 adults and children turning out to help us clear bracken at one of them. Parents reinforced our feelings that this timing

suited families better than our Saturday morning work parties which continue to show a depressing decline in volunteers' attendance. The work still needs to be done though, otherwise the Hill would revert to scrub and eventually woodland. Bristol Parks Department does not have the resources to carry out the preservation work we do manually amongst the heather and broom that we try to protect. If you value the wonderful colours that the Hill displays throughout the year, come along and help, even if it is only once or twice a year. Your Hill needs YOU!

**R**eturning this year, after a three-year absence, is our Family Fun Dog Show (see inside). Free to enter, the event is open to everybody, and we know there are a lot of dog lovers and owners in the area. So, we are keeping our fingers crossed for better autumn weather than the summer produced and look forward to seeing many of you on Sunday 11th October from 1.30pm (registration) and 2pm for the judging. Lots of prizes, free tea, coffee and snacks will be available, plus stalls and displays from several animal charities who would love to talk to you and welcome your involvement.



Autumn 2015

## **ABC of Troopers Hill**

**X** is for eXcellence

The successful management of the Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve has been recognised, in recent years, by a series of prestigious awards. The site was awarded a Green Flag for seven consecutive years, 2007/8 to 2013/14, for a well-managed high-quality green space with significant community involvement. The Royal Horticultural Society It's Your Neighbourhood awards were achieved at level 4 (Thriving) in 2011, and Level 5 (Outstanding) in 2012, 2013 and 2014. The nature reserve also won the RHS Britain in Bloom South West Parks and Open Spaces GOLD medal award in 2014 (2015 results yet to be announced at time of writing). These awards reflect the continued efforts of Friends of Troopers Hill, - and in particular Susan and Rob Acton-Campbell - working in co-operation with Bristol Parks to ensure the Management Plan for the LNR is developed, kept current, and implemented. Their work has included writing and submitting detailed and accurate entries for the different award categories. Friends are grateful to their Chair and Work Party Organiser for highlighting the importance of the LNR through the achievement of such excellent results in these competitions.

Bryn Friallen

#### WANTED



### **Newsletter Editor** No experience necessary

"The Hill" will soon be needing a new editor as your current one will be moving on. This could be a chance to make your mark as well as keep over 500 members informed and entertained.
Your task will be to produce four newsletters a year. You may want to continue the current style, or completely change it to be your own.
If you are interested, please contact Susan (details in Contacts Panel) or email: the ed@troopers-hill.org.uk

# **A Summer of Fun**





## **Shepherds Way**

I'm going to start this article with "well, September is with us again", which indeed it is. But I'm also going to look back over the last few months at one particular event which has, and will continue, to take place in many of the fantastic green spaces around this vibrantly green city, and that is the 'BioBlitz'.

**S**o, what is a BioBlitz? In short, it is an intense period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all the living species within a designated area. Generally, a BioBlitz will be conducted within a specific timeframe of 24-48 hours. Organisers want the general public, schools and children to get involved. These events are fantastic opportunities for everybody to engage with green spaces and learn the importance of them and the diverse array of nature and wildlife within them. It helps people to have a better understanding and a greater respect for the vulnerable wildlife within these environments and the world in general. They are manned and organised by unpaid volunteers, and they are free!

**T**here are many BioBlitzes throughout the year in Bristol. Many groups and organisations run these events. They are an essential means to gather vital information which, when collected and collated, then goes to local records offices, where it is available to any interested parties.

Experts are on hand to answer your questions. Scientific equipment is available, and a wealth of information passed around which will hopefully encourage visitors to have a greater understanding of our natural world. Believe me, you do not need to watch television to see nature at its best. It's already there - and in your own back yard!

At these BioBlitzes, schoolchildren and youngsters are encouraged to get involved with wildlife. This is fantastic, because it's a cheap hobby. It's a good way of getting exercise and good, clean, fresh air. Its has huge educational value, and is a fun way to engage with a vitally important, interesting and fascinating topic.

**I** believe that, over the years, many of us have lost contact with wildlife and nature. I'm not sure why, but we've become disengaged from it, and it seems to have become an elitist's pastime! I always live in hope that if you can educate the child, then the child will educate the adult - their parents.

These events are there for all to enjoy, including the family pet. I often hear from people who attend BioBlitzes and I notice myself, when walking around parks and wildlife reserves, the good old friendly family pet: Patch the Jack Russell, Sid the Spaniel, Poppet the Pomeranian and Truffles. Truffles has a pedigree as long as your arm, a fine thoroughbred history. Related to lines of well-bred and distinguished dogs, Truffles is as unruly as any of the finest mongrels that she is distantly related to. It seems as soon as the family arrives, Truffles is 'let off the leash'. Well, we know what comes next!

**S**quirrels shoot up trees faster than a ferret up a drainpipe, birds are chased, and all manner of creatures worried and stressed. In some instances, I have heard of dogs actually catching these creatures with an unpleasant end result.

**S**o why do we allow Truffles and her mates to behave in this unruly manner? Responsible dog owners and wildlife lovers will keep their dogs on a lead or let them run around on a field area. Of course, family events mean family events, and our beloved pet is part of the family. BUT, please let's keep them under control and not allow them to destroy or upset the wildlife that, as humans, we are trying to protect.

**S**o here endeth my lesson. Go out, take advantage of and enjoy these marvellous events. Take home the knowledge that you gain from them, but please keep Truffles on her lead to no longer hassle or torment the fantastic and beautiful wildlife that is there for us all to admire and enjoy.

Steve Shepherd



## Seven new trees for **Troopers Hill Field?**

As part of Bristol City Council's One Tree Per Child tree planting project, which aims to have every one of Bristol's 36,000 primary schoolchildren planting at least one tree, it has been suggested that 7 new trees are planted in Troopers Hill Field. There would be 6 new cherry trees planted between the existing cherry trees that grow near the beech hedge on by the tarmac path on the west side of Troopers Hill Field and continuing to finish at the south west corner of A sinthe Field near the Malvern Rd entrance. gle hornbeam would be planted to restore the avenue of hornbeams that runs along the east side of the Field near the allotment fence. The proposed sites of the trees are shown in the photo by this article, marked as A and B.



If planted the trees will be "whips", that is very young trees just over a metre tall. They would be staked and enclosed in cages to protect them. If anyone would like to have a larger, sponsored or memorial tree of the same species instead, you will be able to pay Bristol City Council to do this once the plan is approved. More about tree sponsorship on <a href="www.bristol.gov.uk/">www.bristol.gov.uk/</a> page/environment/tree-bristol-sponsorship

Are you in favour of this planting scheme? If you have any comments for or against this proposal please contact Bristol City Council's Tree Officer, Josie Sadler on 0117 922 3719 or email treebristol@bristol.gov.uk. If approved, planting will be carried out this winter as part of a special tree planting event.

Susan Acton-Campbell

#### **Dates for your Diary**

Work Parties: Saturdays 3rd Oct,7th Nov, 5th Dec and 9th Jan 10am-midday. New meeting point: Entrance from Troopers Hill Field to Troopers Hill, by red slide. Help us look after Troopers Hill. Gentle exercise and a bit of a laugh over some coffee.

<u>Meetings</u>. Thursdays 10th Sept, 12th Nov. 7.15pm, Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road. Come along and share your views on our Local Nature Reserve.

St George Strollers: Wed 7th Oct: Pocket Parks. Meet Old Market Island bus stop, 10.30am. Tue 20th Oct: Partnership Walk. Meet Pile Marsh bus stop, 9.15am. Fri 23rd Oct: Weavers Mill to Hill and back. Meet corner of Blackswarth Rd, by Weavers Mill, 10.30am. Tue 10th Nov: Haunted Bristol. Meet bus stop opp Aldi, Church Rd, 7<u>pm</u> or the Cascade Steps, the Centre, 7.30<u>pm.</u> Wed 25th Nov: **Kingswood Deer**. Meet Aldi, Church Rd 10.15am. Mon 7th Dec: Discover the Dings. Meet Lidl car park, Lawrence Hill, 10.30am. Thurs 17th Dec: **Christmas Walk** and meeting. Meet Summerhill Methodist Church, 10.30am. Bring Christmas fare to share.

Walks: (Booking essential—see Contacts panel) Sunday 4th Oct, 10am: Looking at Lichens. Join expert David Hill to look at an important aspect of the Hill's ecology that is often overlooked Sunday 1st Nov, 10.30am: Fungi Foray. Join John and Doreen Bailey in a hunt for mushrooms and toadstools on Troopers Hill.

Sunday 29th Nov, 2.00pm: **Geology Walk.** Join expert Andrew Mathieson exploring the geology of Troopers Hill. Slide Show Review of 2015, Thurs 3rd Dec, 7.15-9.00pm. Summerhill Methodist Church, Summerhill Rd. Join us to find out more about what FoTH have been up to this year, followed by refreshments and a chance to chat.

#### 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

friends@troopers-hill.org.uk www.facebook.com/TroopersHill

Or tweet us at

#### www.twitter.com/troopershill

To book a place on an event, Phone Judith 0117 955 9819 Or email

events2015@troopers-hill.org.uk

**Walking for Health** (St George Strollers) Contact Kit Elliott 02036405867

strollers@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. He can be contacted via the Police non-urgent phone number 101 Shepherds Way is on BCFM, 93.2FM, every Wednes-

day from 6-8pm, and available online at

http://bcfmradio.com/shepherdsway