

The Friends of Troopers Hill



November/December 2006



As usual, there were rather a lot of fireworks remains on Troopers Hill after the various festivities. We would like to say a particular thank you to the 13 year old boy who very helpfully collected a lot of them and put them into a box for us to take away. "Well done" to him and all our other similar unsung heroes..

The quiz night we had to postpone in September is being rescheduled for Thursday, 15th February at Beeses Tearooms. Starting at 7.30 pm, Beeses are opening especially for us and will be operating their ferry for those that want to walk. Start getting your team together folks as we already have a lot of interest from other groups like ourselves and competition will be fierce.

Many thanks also to those who turned out to help with our first ever Kite Event. You can read a report elsewhere in the newsletter, but we would especially like to mention Roger and Carol for their knowledgeable efforts, and their friends Peter and Paul who travelled a long way to help us out.

Sally Oldfield's new project 'Nature in the City' covers 5 wildlife sites in Bristol including Troopers Hill. Next year there will be events on all the sites and Sally will be producing Newsletters to keep people up to date. If you would like to receive copies please contact Sally. You can find out more about Nature in the City on our website.

Money received this year from YANSEC, Akzo Nobel, Somerfield's staff casual dress day, the Big Lottery Breathing Places Award (read more overleaf) and other donations mean that Friends of Troopers Hill have raised over £14,000 in 2006. To this can be added nearly 350 volunteer hours at work parties and many more hours organising and running events, producing and distributing Newsletters and updating the website. It doesn't happen all by itself folks!

Many of you will have known Gordon and Pauline Elliott who have often been seen walking their dog, Rolo, on Troopers Hill and in Crews Hole Woodland. Now that Gordon's long illness has sadly taken him from us, we are sure you will join with other Friends in sending Pauline all our sympathy. Gordon cared deeply for Troopers Hill, the preservation of the history surrounding it and, with Pauline, was a strong supporter of Friends of Troopers Hill from the start of the group's existence.

January, a hedge was dug for thee,
Hazel, rose and hawthorn tree.
A bird box bonanza in February,
Homes for birds in some of our trees.
March, a history exhibition,
(Tho' lacking in participation).
April, we joined the Easter throng,
And enjoyed the faithful's song.
In May, the birds added their chorus
The walk, John Tully guided for us.
June, the Festival of Nature,
A 1,000 leaflets were a feature.
In July the Brass Band struck up,

It was hard work, but what a take up!
August, we did the Purple Prowl,
Green toothed spiders made us howl.
Balloon racing saw August through
Family Fun picnic and storytelling too.
September, we did a River walk
Rob, Julian and Bernard did a talk,
October, let's go fly a kite,
What an active, colourful sight.
November, we plan two oh oh seven,
Not everyone one's idea of heaven.
December, it will be the AGM
Please come and see us then.

Friends of Cock Road Ridge

Cock Road Ridge is owned by South Gloucestershire Council and is located on the eastern edge of Bristol in Kingswood. As the name suggests it comprises a ridge of land, running between Mount Hill and Cadbury Heath and comprises of thicket, woodland, two ponds, hedgerows and formally planted specimen trees. There are also many fruit trees on the Ridge as the land was once a huge orchard.

Lush and green, the Ridge is a hidden oasis of pleasant walks, with a diverse range of wildlife and magnificent views over Bristol and towards Bath.

The public can enjoy a number of footpaths running through it, although access is available over the whole area.

It is looked after by a group of volunteers who meet on a monthly basis. The Friends of Cock Road Ridge group was formed in 1993 when a handful of local people got together with David Morrison from the Kingswood District. The Friends set up a management plan for the area and this was then adopted by the council as a practical way of managing the Ridge.

Friends meet once a month to discuss work in progress as well as projects to be undertaken on workdays. These generally occur once a month on week-ends, but occasionally an extra day may be used for additional work or special projects. Projects may include pond maintenance, scrub clearance, orchard pruning, installing steps on muddy slopes, bird box maintenance, wildlife surveys, tree and bulb planting and anything else that makes the Ridge a better experience for the community.

Like many groups around the country, we enjoy the social aspect of the work as well as the challenge and the satisfaction of what we achieve. There's a little more detail on our website at - <http://www.cock-road-ridge.org.uk>

Lee Walker

Please Come and Help:

Extra work parties, all at 10 am on Saturdays, are going to be held on 25 November, 16 December, 13 and 27 January. We hope to get on top of some of the bramble, so please come and help.

CONTACT US

If you'd like to talk to us about any issues raised here, please contact:
Susan Acton-Campbell (Chair), Tel. **0117 947 5037**.
Sally Oldfield (Bristol Council Local Nature Reserves Officer),
Tel. **0117 922 4429**

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

Or email:
chair@troopers-hill.org.uk
or
sally_oldfield@bristol-city.gov.uk



Troopers Hill Kite Event

Saturday 14th October saw the Friends of Troopers Hill organise their first kite event. Contrary to popular belief, kite flyers don't like too much wind so we hoped that, on the day, the usual October gales would not materialise and lo and behold they didn't. In fact we could have done with a bit more wind. But as in life you can't always have what you want, when you want it. Our invited kite flyers Peter and Paul (no they are not birds!), led the way by flying a rather large kite called a *Sled*. After it successfully sat in the sky for a while, in the failing wind, they decided to attach an inflatable, in the shape of a dog, to the kite line in addition to the long streamers that they had already attached. After the wind failed almost completely, they resorted to trying to land very light kites on the chimney itself. Some pictures are on the FoTH website.

In the kite workshop, children were making kites very similar in shape to the big sled. The children were able to make their own kites and understand how they worked in the air and also add a splash of colour, if they wanted to, by decorating them.

In between flying and making kites, there were refreshments and not to forget the big chocolate chip cookies which seemed to go down well. Everyone continued flying despite the lack of wind, Roger and Paul erected a huge pink stretched out rectangle piece of material which is called a *Wind-bow* and they played with this for a while.

Parents and children were enjoying quality time together without spending lots of money. That afternoon Troopers Hill was busy, it proved to be a wonderful and safe place to fly kites, not to forget the wonderful view as a background to the kites which the children had created.

Carol Parry

Dates for your Diary

Work parties will be held on the following Saturdays: 25th November, 2nd December, 16th December, 6th January, 13th January, 27th January, and 3rd February. 10am—midday. *Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown. Come and help us get on top of the bramble.*

Thursday 7th December: Meeting to talk about the design for our new Troopers Hill Information Leaflet. 7.15—9.00pm. *Wesley Memorial Church Hall. If you have an interest in leaflet design, we'd be delighted to have your help.*

Wednesday 13th December: AGM and Slide Show 7.15 —9.00pm. *Wesley Memorial Church Hall. Come and find out how we've got on this year.*

Thursday 15th February: Quiz Night and Raffle! 7.30 pm onwards. *Beeses Tearooms. Ferry will be available to take you over the river. Lots of prizes and a buffet will be available. Get your team together now and contact Susan.*

Bristol's First Green Flag?

In 2007 Bristol Parks intend to apply for four Green Flag Awards: for The Downs; Blaise Castle Estate; Queens Square and Troopers Hill. The applications will be made in January and the judging will take place in the summer. Green Flag Awards are only for one year, so to keep your Green Flag you have to re-apply and have the site judged again each year.

Green Flags are awarded to parks and open spaces in a similar way to the better known Blue Flags for beaches. So far none have been awarded in Bristol; the nearest is Royal Victoria Park in Bath.

The fact that Bristol Parks have chosen Troopers Hill for a Green Flag application is something we should be very proud of and FoTH will be discussing with Bristol Parks the improvements that are needed to bring the site up to Green Flag standards. One aspect is that the entrances should be made more welcoming. If you have any ideas to improve the entrances please let us know.

The choice of Troopers Hill for the application demonstrates Bristol Park's commitment to the hill. It also shows that the work we have all done over the past three years has been noticed and is appreciated. You can find out more about the Green Flag Award Scheme at www.greenflagaward.org.uk

Big Lottery Fund Breathing Places Award

Troopers Hill is featured on the BBC's Breathing Places website and in the Breathing Places booklets. These have been promoted through the Spring Watch and Autumn Watch programmes featuring Bill Oddie.

When it was announced that there was going to be Lottery Funding available, linked to the Breathing Places campaign, we thought we would have a good chance of winning. The scheme was announced by the Big Lottery Fund in June and applications for up to £10,000 had to be in by the end of July. We were going away in the middle of July so this gave us about 4 weeks to get the application completed.

We discussed my draft application at our June meeting and then finalised it in the first week of July. Sally Oldfield was able to recommend the right people to go to and I was able to get quotes for the various items very quickly.

Our final application was for £9,984.01: for Information Leaflets (£4,091.35); Bugs and Beasts Event for Children (£264.25); Flora and Fauna Recognition Workshops (£1,527.50); Wildlife Surveys (£1,800.75); Publicity, Meetings and Exhibitions (£1,115.59) and additional tools for use at Work Parties (£1,184.57).

While we hoped we would get some of the money we didn't expect to get all of it. Sally was asked to write a reference, so with a tight deadline and threats that our application would be rejected if it wasn't met, it was a good sign when none of the details of the application were questioned.

I was very nervous when I opened the letter that arrived on the 7th October with a Big Lottery Fund post mark. Great news: "I am pleased to inform you that we have awarded a grant to Friends of Troopers Hill for £9,984".

The money is now in our bank account and we have to spend it by 29th October 2007. A meeting to talk about the design of the leaflets will be held at 7.15 pm on 7th Dec in the Wesley Memorial Church Hall. Come along and give us your ideas. Other details of the project will be in future editions of 'The Hill' and on our website.

Rob Acton-Campbell