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The Friends of Troopers Hill

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Spring 2009



Winter is, of course, a quiet time on Troopers Hill. That said, Friends continue to be active with work parties. We had to postpone the WP scheduled for the 7th February. It was very icy and when Rob couldn't move his car to open his garage and get our tools out, we decided it would be too dangerous to work on the Hill. Still, there was work that needed doing (trimming the new hedge along Greendown) so we rescheduled for the 21st and a good turn out completed the work in record time.

The 17th Bristol Scouts have been busy building bird and bat boxes for us. So, on Sunday 25th January, several Friends joined some very tired scouts (they'd been on an overnight hike the night before) to install 16 luxury apartments for a variety of birds and bats in the Crews Hole woodland. We shall monitor them closely to see who takes up residence.

Friday 10th April will bring the annual Good Friday Service on Troopers Hill. The procession starts from Summerhill Methodist Church at 11.30am, and as well as our usual presence for the event, Friends are organising an Easter Egg hunt for the little ones. So, bring your kids along to join in and find as many eggs as they can.

Many thanks to Brian for doing some valuable (and time consuming) research into whether it would be worth registering Friends of Troopers Hill as a charity. In the end, it was decided at our last meeting that it would not be worth it, due to the administration costs involved.

It has taken a long time, but we are assured that work is about to start on the new fence and entrance along Greendown. The old wooden fence is in very poor condition but the new one will last a lot longer and present a smaller profile. The new gate will enable a safer exit from TH onto Greendown itself rather than onto the corner of the (at times) dangerous Troopers Hill Road.

We have photographs to show that there were virtually no trees on TH 50 years ago, and we have photos to show that there are now. However, we don't seem to have much on the interim period. Somebody must have some pictures of the Hill as it changed through being scrubland and finally became fully fledged woodland. If you can help fill in the gap, please get in touch.

Friends hope to have two tables at this year's [Barton Hill History Group Exhibition](#). It's on Saturday 28th March in the Bethesda Church. Further details in the "Dates" section on the last page.

Good news — we've just had confirmation that the Bristol Primary Care Trust is willing to subsidise this year's "Tai Chi on the Hill" again (actually, it's on the Field). Last year's sessions were very popular. Further info in our [events leaflet](#) and next edition of "The Hill". If you can't wait until then, a new course starts at the Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Thursday 2nd April at 7pm.

Troopers Hill Field - The Future

On Saturday 28th March, 11am-12.30pm, there will be a [public consultation meeting](#) at Summerhill Methodist Church on Summerhill Rd to talk about the future of Troopers Hill Field.

What do you want to see on Troopers Hill Field? A green open space similar to what you have now? Play equipment? Paths? This is your chance to directly affect what happens. £10,000 has been made available from the government's to improve play facilities for children in the 8-13 age [Play Path Finder Programme](#) range. As you probably know this is a VERY small amount of money in terms of costs of play equipment; it equates to one or two items of equipment. Fortunately there are ways of obtaining other funds. These funds need not be restricted to benefitting any age range.

For any grants or public funds to be made available it must be shown that there is strong public support for whatever project is proposed. This meeting is for you to say what you want in Troopers Hill Field. If there is no publicly voiced need for any change to the Field then the Play Path Finder money can be re-allocated to other green spaces.

Bristol City Council are arranging for a Play Worker to come to the meeting so if you bring your children to the meeting they will be encouraged to provide their own ideas, via drawings and other activities, while the adults have their say.

Whatever your age please do come along to decide Troopers Hill Field's future.

Susan Acton-Campbell

Contacts

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:

chair@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:

events2009@troopers-hill.org.uk

SNOW FUN ON TROOPERS HILL



While the snow brought chaos and problems to many and large parts of the country ground to a standstill, it brought people out en masse to Troopers Hill. In the 10 years your editor has lived overlooking the Hill, he has NEVER seen so much snow on TH, nor so many toboggans.

They came in all shapes and sizes and the Forum was buzzing with news of the variety of devices that were employed to speed down the Hill. Stories of full-size surfboards, trays and in one of Bristol's parks, even a bath was found to have been used—wonder how they cleaned up when



they went home? Of course, it all produced a lot more work for Julian and his band of merry men who had to tidy up afterwards.

It was, however, really good to see so many people enjoying the fun that Troopers Hill has to offer. We think many, who had not been on the Hill for many years, were encouraged to return and enjoy the wonderful views. Fortunately, as far as we know, no one was lost under an avalanche, nor died of hypothermia!

Bristol Living Rivers

Bristol's new interactive online map www.bristolstreets.co.uk now has an "Environment" section with two new layers - "GreenCity" and "Quiet places".

The GreenCity layer shows what's happening in your city to make Bristol a greener and more pleasant place to live. We recognise that the reason Bristol has gained its green reputation, is because of the individuals that live here, the people that work here and those of you who give up hours of your time voluntarily to run projects and community groups that make our city greener. This is an opportunity for you to let others know what you are doing by putting a marker on the map. There is a category on 'water' so you can mark those watery things you are doing and there are lots of other categories as well. You can also find out what is happening in your neighbourhood, search for individuals, community groups, organisations and businesses that are making your city greener. Look for markers that fit into specific green categories such as energy, food or water. It is all intended to make you feel part of a green community across the city and inspire you to do more to make Bristol Greener in the future.

We are currently co-ordinating the 2009 abandoned trolley survey (in watercourses). Many thanks to those of you who have walked a length of Bristol rivers to go in search of straying trolleys. You will be glad to hear that the total number is down on last year thanks to the free collection service by TCS. To report an abandoned supermarket trolley, please call Bristol City Council customer services on 0117 9222100. We will put the results up when the survey is complete on www.bristol.gov.uk/rivers

Get On Board is a project to improve the Floating Harbour environment. In the summer we will be launching a Water Award Scheme for boaters to encourage vessels to manage their waste in a responsible way. A new pump out station has recently been installed at the Harbourside and we are expecting a new one at Temple Backs soon as well. These are places where vessels can pump out their waste. Talking of the Floating Harbour, reedbeds have been installed by Crest Nicholson, with walkways along the Harbour front near the old gasworks site. You can find out more about these and other sustainable drainage systems at

www.bristol.gov.uk/rivers Just go to the link 'Sustainable Drainage and Green Roofs' The South Bristol Riverscapes Project is going to produce some Audio Trails - recording/editing/collecting oral stories over the next year. Hopefully making all of this material available on their forthcoming website. If you are interested in getting involved in doing some recording and you would be interested in some training, please contact: helen.adshead@bristol.gov.uk

Kathy Derrick

Why St George needs a Planning Group

Planning decisions are supposed to be made according to planning policies. However this is not 'an exact science' and planning officers say 'each case is decided on its merits.'

Local groups can therefore influence planning decisions, by knowing the relevant policies and by discussing them with the Case Officer. There is much to be said therefore for setting up a group to build knowledge of the system and contacts within the planning department.

Bristol has adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which lays out how local people will be included in planning decisions. It requires that people are consulted at an early stage 'before specific proposals are made...and while there is still the potential to make a difference,' instead of after the planning application is made. At the moment only 'Major' schemes (over 10 housing units, or 1000 square metres of employment space) must include a Community Involvement Statement. However the SCI recommends that all developers should consult.

St George includes much land where development may be contemplated. Stibbs Hill is a case in point. Community Involvement works better if the developer can have negotiations with a group rather than by public exhibitions. Other applications like the subdivision of houses, building on gardens etc can also be taken up by the group. It may not always be possible to influence the outcome, but it often is! Bristol has 40 such planning groups, many over 20 years old. The Neighbourhood Planning Network can help with the formation of a new group.

Andy King

Jules's Diary

Hello Troopers.

Two great philosophers (loose description) come to mind: Bob & Boris.

Boris first. The British ingenuity for "seeing a dining-table and thinking 'Wiff-Waff'" was shown during the recent snows on The Hill. A plethora of sled adaptations were found in parks across the city. None more so than at the bottom of the steep slopes of Trooper's. Plastic crates and crate-lids seemed a favourite, if fragile (physics appears to be low on school curricula), closely followed by baking trays (used presumably by smaller luge contenders) and suitcases as well as the usual cardboard and plastic sheeting. It was good to see the Hill so busy and full of laughing, cheery people. If only they weren't too exhausted by their efforts to carry their improv home with them (minor gripe).

And now all things seem green suddenly. Spring is now officially here, the equinox having passed, and Nature's game's afoot. Many humblebees, even the odd butterfly, birdsong, and the vibrant green of new shoots and flashes of yellow are harbingers of a new season. Times, or at least Seasons, are a-changing...

Which leads me on to Mr Zimmerman...

The Parks Review moves on and is now reaching its conclusion, so not only times but some faces (not all) will be changing as they move on to exciting new adventures (not least a certain Community Parks Manageress!). Rob has notified some changes on the [Forum](#) and updates will follow as revealed. Possibly by the time you read this all will be in place.

But I'll not say more "...'cos the wheel's still in spin."

Cheers,

jules

ABC of Troopers Hill

A is for Ants. It is surprising to find that Ants do not appear in the species lists of the surveys carried out to identify the invertebrates present on Troopers Hill. Tussocks formed by ants' nests are a feature of the grassy areas of the Hill. The ants which build them are Yellow Meadow Ants (*Lasius flavus*). The nests are highly intricate, with numerous fine channels made in the soil; the whole structure is reinforced by the roots and shoots of plants. The mounds usually have one flat face which is oriented towards the south-east, thus maximising the benefits of the early morning sunshine.

Learn to use a computer

We realise that many of our readers do not have access to, or do not know how to use a computer. We have mentioned before that you can use a computer in your local library to access the Internet, visit our excellent website or email us for free.

If, however, you are not confident about using the library computers on your own, The [Beacon Centre](#) on Russell Town Avenue in Redfield is running a series of Open Access sessions, where you can learn how to use one at your own pace. The sessions are supported by experienced staff who are on hand to help and you can find out about the times of the sessions from Sue on 0117-3775132, or simply drop in at the Beacon Centre itself. A £5 registration fee is payable each academic year.

We really would recommend trying them out as you can find out much more about Troopers Hill and the many other Local Nature Reserves in Bristol by going "Online".

Friends of Troopers Hill: Dates for your Diary

Saturday 4th April: Work Party. 10am until midday. Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown.

Sunday 19th April: Avon Valley Walk. 10am — 4pm. A guided walk through Conham, Dundry Park, Troopers Hill, St. Anne's Woods, Nightingale Valley & Eastwood Farm, finishing at [Beeses Bar & Tea Rooms](#). Meet at Conham car park. 5 miles long walk, no need to book.

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

Wednesday 13th May: 7.15pm. Meeting. Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Bryant's Hill. All are welcome. We need your thoughts.

Sunday 17th May: 10.30am. Wildlife Walk. Join Rupert Higgins of Wessex Ecological Consultancy for a guided walk investigating the wildlife on Troopers Hill. *Please note: It is essential to book your place for this event in advance. See our "Contacts" panel.*

Saturday 6th June: Work Party. 10am until midday. Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown.

Saturday 20th June: Music On The Hill. From 6pm.. A summer evening of music on Troopers Hill, provided by the Bristol Concert Wind Band. Bring a picnic and relax.

Other Events

Saturday 28th March: Troopers Hill Field Public Consultation Meeting. 11am—12.30pm. Summerhill Methodist Church, Summerhill Road. *It is MOST important that as many people as possible attend to show support for play development in the field, so please try and come along to add your voice. Children are welcome and a Play Worker will be there to help involve them.*

Saturday 28th March: [Barton Hill History Group](#) Exhibition. 10am — 4pm. Bethesda Church Hall, Church Rd, Redfield. *This year the theme is "Remembering the 1950s and 1960s".*

Friday 10th April: Good Friday Service on the Hill, organised by local Churches. *Procession starts 11.30am from Summerhill Methodist Church.*