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# The Friends of Troopers Hill

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Summer 2010

## The Hole on the Hill

**A**s reported in the winter edition of 'The Hill', some subsidence appeared in January in the 'bomb crater' at the top of the hill. If you go on the hill you will see that the whole of the crater has now been fenced off.

**B**ristol Parks commissioned a report from Bristol Coalmining Archives and sought the advice of a structural engineer. The report states that 'the circular area, essentially flat with a rim of made ground around the centre is typical of abandoned shafts throughout the coalfield'. As described on our website [History page](#), there are known to be mines under Troopers Hill. Friends of Troopers Hill have a copy of a plan of the Fireclay mine that was abandoned in 1908. This mine was accessed by a near horizontal tunnel running from near the river. Bristol Coalmining Archives suggest in their report that this tunnel could have been dug originally to drain an earlier mine that dates from the 1700s. Comparing the location of our shaft with the mine plan, it does appear to be above the access tunnel to the fireclay mine.

**B**ristol Coalmining Archives' conclusion was that it was likely to be a mine shaft dug in the 1700s and if so, it was likely to have been about 140 feet deep going down to the Buff Vein.

**O**n the advice of their structural engineer, Bristol Parks have now asked for quotes to carry out the drilling of bore holes to establish whether there are any substantial voids under the ground, or whether the subsidence is simply due to the fill in the old mine shaft consolidating over time. We have a [page on our website](#) that will be updated as more information becomes available.

**I**f you would like to know more about mining under the hill, we will have copies of the mine plans and other information on view at the Music on the Hill event in June.



**T**his winter was a trying time on Troopers Hill. For the first time, since Friends have been involved with it, the Good Friday Service could not be held on the Hill. It took place in Summerhill Methodist Church instead. We also lost several work parties as a result of the bad weather. Fortunately turnout to the ones that did

take place has been good and we have managed to keep up with our schedule. Now we are into the bird nesting season, we have to concentrate on more open areas. You will be very welcome to come and help us on the first Saturday of every month. Details in the diary.

**W**e are used to the general litter that seems to be left on the Hill by more thoughtless visitors. Broken glass, however, can be a more severe problem since it is dangerous to pick up and the many dog walkers and other helpful people who regularly pick up rubbish cannot be expected to help with it. This is from the Council website regarding rubbish, litter and glass:

*"You can report flytipping, graffiti, or make any other comments about Bristol's parks and green spaces. Please provide as much information and specific details as possible about the location attaching any supporting photographs. We will only call you back if we require further information".*

Phone them on 0117 922 3719 or text them on 07710 396 713. You can also email them on:

[bristolparks@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:bristolparks@bristol.gov.uk)

**I**t is with great pleasure that we welcome Jules back to the Hill after a period of recuperation from his recent illness. In particular your Ed is very pleased to be able to include his always different diary in our newsletter again. Enjoy!

**D**ig out the picnic basket and the folding chairs. Make sure you've got your sun screen and hat. It's that time of year again, folks, and the Friends of Troopers Hill Music on the Hill concert is coming. Saturday 19th June is the date and this year we have invited the City of Bristol Brass Band along to serenade us. As usual the event is free having been sponsored this time by the BCC Community Festival and Event Fund. We confidently expect the good weather to return, so see you there at 6 pm.

**D**on't forget to bring your camera with you and enter your photos in our Photo Competition. Any events that take place on the Hill count for our competition—whether it is one of ours, a picnic of your own or anything that you can convince us is an event. Just take your photograph and send it to us by email or mail before the end of November. Two categories—under 16 and 16 or over. We hope to be able to show at least some of the entries at our AGM in December.

**R**emember to check our information line for the latest info on all our events, including weather issues — 0753 161 5983

## Tai Chi on the Hill

This year's Tai Chi event will be a one off. Sunday August 8th between 10 and 11.30 am, the Bristol School of Tai Chi will be giving a thrilling exhibition of how experts in Tai Chi can exercise their skills. Then swords and spears will be put away and a lesson given on a gentle form of this exercise aimed at improving your balance and core body strength. The class will be suitable for all ages from under 10s to over 90s. (A cou-



Tai Chi 2009

ple of weapons photos are on <http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/events/08tc4.htm>).

This event is free, mainly funded by donations from people who enjoyed doing Tai Chi last year.

## Family Fun Picnic

This year's [Bristol Balloon Fiesta](#) weekend is the 14th and 15th August. So, as usual the Friends of Troopers Hill will be organising their annual [Family Fun Picnic](#) on the Saturday from 3pm. As well as our ever popular crafts tent for the kids, [Cassandra Wye](#) will



be returning to take them around the Hill and tell them stories about some of the wildlife they can see on our Local Nature Reserve.

In addition to all this there will be a juggling workshop where anyone can learn to juggle—a very useful life skill!

Bring a picnic, a blanket and stay to watch the balloons taking off from Ashton Court on the other side of Bristol. With a bit of luck, the wind will bring some of them right overhead. The whole event is sponsored by the Bristol City Council [Community Festival and Events fund](#).

## Tracey Morgan visits Troopers Hill

*Tracey Morgan is Bristol City Council Service Director for Environment and Leisure. She visited Troopers Hill to find out how Friends are working with Bristol Parks to maintain our Local Nature Reserve. Ed.*

I visited Troopers Hill in the aftermath of snow in January this year. This was my first visit to the Hill and I was pleased to see the level of engagement and commitment from the Friends Group. I was given a brief history of the Hill, saw the way the park was designed to attract wildlife, the natural space used for dog walkers, the newly designed children's play area and the spectacular views



Rob explains details to Tracey Morgan (centre)

across the city.

I have also been very impressed by the commitment of the friends group to drive forward improvements and events for Troopers Hill and also work with the City Council to put in place better procedures for responding to requirements that the community have.

Environment and Leisure are keen to listen to the needs of the community and respond accordingly. I believe that the Friends group for Troopers Hill have been very influential and have established a good mechanism for working with the Local Area Management teams. We are using this mechanism as a model for engagement, and more recently have had a number of other Park Groups asking for the same level of commitment from the Council to their areas, which we are currently doing.

You have the Music on the Hill event coming up and I hope you have the weather to assist this being another great event. I hope to see you then.

*Tracey Morgan*

## Bristol Smartcard Trial

**B**ristol is running a small Smartcard trial on selected bus services to test customer experience of the technology ahead of the launch of a regional scheme funded by the government.

**T**he council aims to start the trial in June and people who use the services should be able to apply for a card from late May.

**T**he trial will test the technology so that the council, the University of the West of England and their public transport delivery partners can understand more about the benefits and the logistics. It is funded by £20,000 of council funding.

**T**he smartcard safely stores up to £50 cash, and each time it is used it automatically gives the holder a 16% discount off of the cost of the standard cash fare.

**Bus operator Wessex Connect** is to run the smartcard trial on the Long Ashton and Portway Park & Ride services and council supported bus services listed below:

- 517 Avonmouth - Emersons Green
- 518 Shirehampton - Emersons Green
- 584 Kingswood - Sea Mills
- 585 Bristol City Centre - Sea Mills
- 586 Bristol City Centre - Hotwells
- 587 Kingswood - Hotwells

**T**he card can also be used on the **Ulink buses**. In fact, the trial is an expansion of the successful UWE smartcard scheme used on the intercampus services via the centre of Bristol.

**Wessex Connect's** buses are kitted out with the correct ticket machines and back office system at no cost to the council. If the trial is successful Wessex Connect plan to include all of the services that they operate in the Bristol and Bath area.

**P**assengers can use their card to store up to £50 in cash to pay for their day to day bus travel. They can also use it as a season ticket for either one, three or 12 months of regular travel on the service of their choice.

**Councillor Jon Rogers**, Executive Member for Transport and Sustainability, said: "People are impatient for this technology and the regional scheme may be some time in the offing. In the meantime, there's a lot we

can learn about the technology and a lot of benefits we can offer for a fairly low investment."

**A**ll buses included in the trial are fitted with a card reader, when the smartcard is placed on the reader the amount of money on the card will be displayed and the passenger should ask the driver for a ticket in the normal way. The cost of the fare will be deducted from the balance on the card and the driver will issue a ticket, which will display the new card balance.

**T**he smartcard can be loaded with cash up to £20 on the bus, or larger amounts by visiting or posting the smartcard to Brunel House or the Wessex Connect depot. The smartcard can be recharged as often as necessary. There is no need for the passenger to request a new card unless it is lost or damaged.



**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June from 6.00pm**

Join the Friends of Troopers Hill For  
A summer evening of music on Troopers Hill  
with the City of Bristol Brass Band



Bring a picnic and drinks to enjoy the wonderful views over Bristol from the top of Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve while listening to great music. We recommend that you bring blankets or cushions to sit on.

**Please respect our Nature Reserve by not bringing BBQs since they damage the grassland.**



Sponsored by  
the Bristol City  
Council Community  
Festival  
and Events Fund



Troopers Hill is in St George, East Bristol. Local on-street parking only. Buses 44, 44a 45 and 332 pass close-by. Ask to be let off for the "Air Balloon Pub", On the side of the road opposite to the pub, look for the brown sign to Troopers Hill about 100 yards towards the city centre.

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

## ABC of Troopers Hill

### F is for Friends

Friends of Troopers Hill is an informal group of local people who work with Bristol Parks to make sure Troopers Hill receives the care and attention due to it as a Local Nature Reserve. Friends are chaired by Susan Acton-Campbell and meet from time to time to discuss the management of the Hill and to organise events on the Hill and the Field, including walks and talks. Friends provide a community focus for people who care about Troopers Hill. Anyone with an interest can join the Friends of Troopers Hill. On the first Saturday of each month, Friends co-operate in a practical conservation work party to undertake tasks such as fostering the growth of plants typical of acid heathland (for example heather and broom), principally by discouraging competitors (bramble for instance) that would shade them out or overwhelm them. This summer and autumn, why not join the Friends for some gentle exercise in the open air, good for physical fitness and mental health.

### Jules Diary (Bingbongbing)

Hello Troopers,

Well, after a brief sojourn away from the Hill, spent mostly under my electric blanket hibernating from "the coldest winter on record" studying mediaeval history, I returned to find it had jollied along quite nicely without me thank you very much. (HUMPF!) Well-done Keith!

I returned 'part-time' for a few weeks, shame no one told the croziers (*coiled young frond of bracken—Ed*) that they should stop growing in the afternoons, to build up my fitness levels. Good location! (Try to find the positives.)

I've noticed a few changes, the woodpeckers have increased (or got louder) and there seem to be more pseudo bees flitting about as well as the genuine article, and several of those little blue flutterbys.

Oh, and we've gained an 'ole! It could be that the Hill is like a honeycomb (this may explain the bees), there're a few dents & cracks of which people are becoming more aware.

The new picnic area, shaded by the trees in the field, seems very popular on the sunnier weekends, and I've discovered that someone who doesn't actually have to mow it designed the new children's playground.

The Hill is being put forward for renewal of its Green Flag status again this year. Let's hope it is as successful as last year, if not offers for a flag pole (on the back of a £10 note, buyer collects) will be gratefully received. I'm confident it will.

When I pointed out to a visitor the view of St Mary Redcliffe, framed by The Gulley, they said it was the finest view from a park that they'd seen for a long time. Not bad eh?

Cheers,

Jules

## Friends of Troopers Hill: Dates for your Diary

**Saturday 19th June: Music on the Hill.** 6 pm — 8 pm. *Join us for a free summer evening of music provided by the City of Bristol Brass Band, while enjoying the views over Bristol. Bring a blanket and a picnic but please, no barbecues.*

**Saturday 3rd July: Work Party.** 10 am—midday. Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown. *Come along and help us look after Troopers Hill.*

**Tuesday 13th July: Meeting.** 7.15pm, Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road. *Share your views on our Local Nature Reserve.*

**Saturday 7th August: Work Party.** As 3rd July.

**Sunday 8th August: Tai Chi on the Hill.** 10—11.30 am. *Join the Bristol School of Tai Chi for a spectacular demonstration followed by a 1 hour introductory class with gentle exercise for all ages – no booking required, just turn up and join in.*

**Saturday 14th August: Family Fun Picnic with Storytelling & Juggling.** 3 pm on. *Join us in our children's craft tent and listen to our old friend [Cassandra Wye](#) telling stories about the wildlife on Troopers Hill. Bring a picnic and stay to watch the Hot Air Balloon ascent from Ashton Court at around 7 pm.*

**Sunday 10th October: Family Fun Dog Show.** Troopers Hill Field, 2 pm on. *Put it in your diary now and bring your pet along to join in and maybe win a prize. All classes free thanks to BCC Community Festival and Events Fund.*

## 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