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The Friends of Troopers Hill

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Summer 2014



For seven straight years now, Troopers Hill has been awarded a Green Flag, of which we have been justifiably very proud. This year, however, there will be no Green Flag for the Hill. Bristol, which in 2015 will be "European Green Capital", will in fact not have a single Green Flag to its

name. Why? Because, as a result of the re-organisation, there was no-one available in the Council to support the application process! An unbelievable state of affairs. After all the work that volunteers have carried out over the years to promote and help earn these flags (not to mention earn the Green Capital award), this is sheer betrayal and simply should not have been allowed to happen. The worry now is that there will be no more Flag applications and that Parks Department will be able to quietly turn their backs on the many Friends groups that work to protect all our green spaces, not just the Green Flag ones. Watch *this* space for further developments.

On a more positive note, we are delighted to hear that a new "Friends of Dundridge Park" group has been formed. Friends of Troopers Hill will be delighted to offer any support we can to encourage them. This means that in the close vicinity we now have Friends groups at Dundridge, Magpie Bottom, Troopers Hill and St George Park.

And on the subject of the Friends of St George Park, we would like to congratulate Marie Burke and Colette Tuckey on being elected co-chairs to the group. You may remember Marie as she was, until recently, the Park Keeper and has demonstrated a great devotion to the Park both professionally and now as a volunteer.

I am delighted to welcome a new, regular contributor to "The Hill". Steve Shepherd from BCFM radio "Shepherds Way" will be writing a regular column of observations, news and opinions that he and his colleagues come across during their weekly show. In this edition, he introduces himself. Enjoy!

Steve Britton lives on Greendown and is one of our most supportive members. He has very kindly volunteered to look after the plant bed at the corner of Greendown and Troopers Hill Road, but he needs some occasional help to do it. If you feel like a little light gardening and would like to help him out, please give Susan a ring—details in the back page contact panel.

Think PINK!

Saturday 21st June
from 6.00pm
Live on Troopers Hill

THE AMBLING BAND!



Brass and Pink collide to create a rich confection of sights and sounds



Bring a Picnic, but NO BBQs
Entertainment ends at 8pm

Local charity Life Cycle UK is seeking donations of unwanted bikes to refurbish. The charity's innovative "BikeBack" project takes unused bikes and teaches prisoners at Horfield Prison how to fix them up, getting old bikes back on the road at affordable prices. BikeBack:

- Saves old bikes from landfill
- Teaches prisoners new skills
- Helps people on low incomes start cycling

But the project needs your unwanted bikes to keep going! Bikes can be dropped off at:

- The CREATE Centre, Smeaton Road, BS1 6XN (8:30am – 5pm, Mon – Fri)
- Horfield Prison, Cambridge Road BS7 8PS (Tuesdays only)

Any age, any style, any condition Life Cycle would love to refurbish it!

For more info on bike donations and sales of refurbished bikes, see: www.lifecycleuk.org.uk/bike-recycling or email bikebackinfo@lifecycleuk.org.uk

Grasses, Peas and Dandelions

Tony Smith of the Bristol Naturalists Society joined us as our expert guide on Sunday 18th May. The walk was part of the 2nd Bristol Walking Festival, a fantastic month of very varied walks across Bristol. <http://tinyurl.com/qzxob3a>. As a result the walk attracted a number of new visitors to Troopers Hill. They found the site beautiful and interesting.



The Hill is covered in beautiful drifts of the colour red at the moment, so Tony started by introducing us to sheep sorrel which produces this wonderful effect. <http://tinyurl.com/oa62ysb>

We then moved on to flowers of the dandelion type. Troopers Hill has so many yellow, shaggy headed flowers. A particular favourite is mouse ear hawkweed whose hairy, small leaves are supposed to resemble its name. <http://tinyurl.com/kpora35> Each flower head of this type is actually composed of many small flowers, each of which could produce a seed. This is how dandelion "clocks" are produced.

Having found mouse ear hawkweed we then moved on to cats ear hawkweed. Tony was giving us easy ways to remember the plant name and pointed out how the leaves at the base of the plant form a saucer, just like a saucer of milk that you might give a cat.

Did you know broom is part of the pea family, as is common vetch? I think this was news to quite a few in our group. Gorse and the coconut smell of its flowers were also discussed. <http://tinyurl.com/q4kgtjx>



The time flew by and it was with great regret we said goodbye to Tony after visiting and talking about more than 20 plants.

Thank you to all the walkers who sat in the sun and completed feedback forms at the end. These will be used as the building blocks for what will hopefully be a 3rd Bristol Walking Festival.

Susan Acton-Campbell

Why study Troopers Hill in A level Geography?

For the past four years, a visit to Troopers Hill has made up a significant part of our day trip to Bristol. It is the case study of a local scale ecological conservation area in the official Edexcel A level textbook.

There are a number of reasons why Troopers Hill is a great case study. In order for our students to evaluate the success of any management scheme they need clear objectives and these are set out in the management plan. It is a great example of a local scale conservation project that meets the needs of maintaining biodiversity yet involves local people in its management.

There is always some element of compromise involved in conservation and Troopers Hill is no exception. You have a number of distinctive habitats such as acid heath and acid grassland that are regionally rare and need conserving. At the same time, you need to maintain public access, which can generate issues such as dog fouling that directly affect the vegetation.



Your Ed' talking about Troopers Hill

What I find interesting are the similarities between the conservation of Troopers Hill and the management of ecosystems globally. In order to protect biodiversity and maintain habitats, conservation projects need to engage the local population, whether that is in Bristol or the tropical rainforest. In fact, when we study the Central Amazon Conservation Project, an area the size of Switzerland near to Manaus (venue for England vs. Italy in the World Cup) we find that its management aims are almost identical to those of Troopers Hill; to actively engage with local people whilst conserving biodiversity.

Therefore, whilst Troopers Hill may be a relatively small plot of land it is significant far beyond East Bristol.

Fred Lewis - Bridgwater College

Shepherds Way

If you had asked me a few years ago, 'Steve, do you think you'll be producing radio programs in a few years' time', I would have uttered a definite, negative, and most certain 'NO'. My word, how wrong I was.

I often say to people, 'we never know what's around the next corner', and when one day, I was asked by a friend, quite out of the blue, if I had any knowledge or information that might be suitable material for ShoutOut, an LGBT radio show, I said yes. I was taken along to meet the producer, sat in front of a microphone, given a pre written script, and was asked to read. The words I spoke were recorded, edited, and were aired on BCfm Radio the following day, I had made my first 'cameo' radio broadcast. I never actually did record what I originally went to chat to the producer about.....I'd been cajoled.

Not knowing at that time where all this would take me, I just followed the flow. The show I worked on, had its pre-recorded lunchtime slot moved, to an evening time, and from then on we all went out live in the studio.

I was lucky, as the producer was a freelance professional sound recordist, who works on TV programs such as "Countryfile". Mary 'the butcher' Milton, taught me much. I will forever be in her debt. I call her the butcher—all will become clear!

About a year on, I did a radio production course and sat in on other producers' shows to see the many different styles of producing and presenting there were. During this time, I did live radio and was taught, by Mary 'the butcher' Milton, the artful skills of editing. This is where you take a rough recording, for example a twenty minute interview or recording, and chop out silences, ums and errs, lip smacks, swear words, cars backfiring etc. Then you concentrate on the verbal content to hone in on the subject matter, and end up painting a colourful picture for radio with a four minute piece.

Mary 'butchers' recordings down to four minutes easily, chopping out what isn't needed, concentrating on the topic of the interview, so it would still tell the story it was originally meant to convey, without distortion. An art I am still learning.

My passion for radio, editing, and presenting, together with the experience I gained working with Mary and the ShoutOut team, Amy Thomas and Terry Starr, led me to 'want', and the word 'want' is something I seldom use. But, I really did 'want' my own radio program - producing, presenting, the lot.



Born into a Warwickshire farming family, and brought up with nature and wildlife, but ignorant of many facts on wildlife, I decided this was the type of show I wanted to create.

I scoured around the festivals, people I knew and friends of friends. Eventually I put together a fantastic team. They are very knowledgeable on all the things of which I am ignorant (and I make no secret of my ignorance). I also make no secret of my passion for wild life and nature - something we humans have little respect for, or understanding of. 'Shepherds Way' was born. It is a dedicated wildlife and nature programme, aired weekly since 26th September 2012 on BCfm radio (93.2fm).

My team are, and in order of me approaching them: Richard Bland, Steve Clampin, Mike Burgess, John Henry Sartain and Mark Pajak. They all have expertise in many fields. However, and I have to say this, Richard Bland's huge knowledge of the local nature and wildlife is invaluable to 'Shepherds Way.' As Sir David Attenborough is to the BBC, so Richard Bland is to 'Shepherds Way'.

Steve Shepherd
[BCfmradio](#)

Night-Time Moth Viewing  Friends of Troopers Hill

Friday 18th July, 9.30pm - 11pm
with the Bristol and District Moth Group
Free but bookings only, places are limited

Find out more about these beautiful and often colourful creatures on TROOPERS HILL



Children accompanied by adults very welcome

Join us round the light-trap

To book your places phone Judith on 0117 955 9819 (Tue-Sat 9.30am-5pm) at Modelmania

OR Susan on 0117 947 5037 at other times

or email events2014@troopers-hill.org.uk

ABC of Troopers Hill

T is for Troopers Hill. Friends are often asked 'Where did the name come from? Who were the troopers?' During the Civil War 1642-1649, Parliamentary troops under the command of Sir Thomas Fairfax were quartered at Hanham before the siege of Bristol in 1645. Troopers Hill would have afforded a useful observation point with its views over the city and, who knows, the soldiers might have stopped there while the commanders planned their approach to Bristol. Documentary evidence relating to the sale of the land in 1758 called it 'Harris's alias Truebody's Hill'. The Truebody family owned and occupied land in and around the locality for about a century. The first recorded use of the name Troopers Hill dates more recently, to 1826, when it was used on the Ordnance Survey map of the Bristol area. It can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/lv8mfng>. The two names, Truebody's Hill and Troopers Hill were both in use during the 1800s, but eventually the name Troopers Hill prevailed. Curiously, the old street name plate on the lower chimney stack at the junction with Crew's Hole Road is spelt Trooper's (singular) Hill Road!

No-one can be sure of the name's origin, but it is entertaining to speculate whether it was named for a trooper, many troopers, or no troopers at all by the corruption of a local family name.

Bryn Friallen

Dates for your Diary

Work Parties: Saturdays 5th July, 2nd August, 6th September, 4th October. 10am—midday. Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown. *Help us look after Troopers Hill. Gentle exercise and a bit of a laugh over some coffee afterwards.*

Meetings. Thursdays 24th July, 11th September, 6th November. 7.15pm, Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road. *Come along and share your views on our Local Nature Reserve.*

Music on the Hill Saturday 21st June. See poster on front page.

Night-time Moth Hunt. Friday 18th July, 9.30-11pm. *Join the Bristol and District Moth Group and find out more about these beautiful and often colourful creatures. Booking essential—see contacts.*

Family Fun Picnic. Saturday 9th August, from 4.30pm. *Bring a picnic (NO BBQs) & enjoy a Bugs and Beasties Hunt with expert Rupert Higgins identifying your finds. Stay and enjoy the view of hot air balloons from the Balloon Fiesta flying.*

Flying Falcons on the Field. Sunday 5th October 2-4.30pm. *See Falcons and other birds of prey flying and learn, from Westcountry Falconry, all about the natural food chain and the importance of falcons and other raptors.*

St George Strollers: Tue 24th Jun: **Dame Sylvia Crowe Walk.** Meet Old Market, 10.10am. for bus to the Create Centre. Fri 11th July: **Snuff Mills Walk** Mon 21st July: **Stockwood Open Space.** Thurs 7th August: **Warmley to Willsbridge Mill Walk.** Tue 26th August: **Golden Valley, Wick Walk.** Fri 12th September: **Crews Hole and Conham's Copper Smelting History Walk.** Wed 24th September: **Purdown Walk.** Further details, contact Clare—see Contacts panel.

Walks: (booking essential—see Contacts panel) Sunday 21st September: **Troopers Hill History Walk.** 10.30am-noon. Join local historian Rob Acton-Campbell to learn more of the history of the Hill and the surrounding area.



Friends were delighted to welcome volunteers from Lloyds Bank who came along and spent a day in May on Troopers Hill. They carried out more of the work that our regular work parties do. As we are now into bird nesting season, we have to be careful not to work in areas

where there may be nests. The volunteers cut bramble, removed tree saplings where they would potentially damage the rare grasses, heather and broom. They also went around our [Fun Learning Trails and Tree Trail](#), checking all the plaques and labels were still in place, clearing and cleaning them where necessary.

Friends were also delighted to help out local community group, Kingsmeadow Community Flat with their dog show at the end of May. The weather held out—not too hot, not too cold and a good attendance helped the community to raise £250 to run their projects.



Our sister group, the Friends of Eastwood Farm, are also holding another dog show this year. It will be on Sunday July 13th. Along with the show, which FoTH are helping out with, there will be lots of other fun and exciting things for the kids to enjoy. Bring your pet along and join in the fun.

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 go to the online forum at:

www.troopers-hill.org.uk/news&views

To book a place on an event,

Phone Judith: 0117 955 9819 Or email:

events2014@troopers-hill.org.uk

Walking for Health (St George Strollers):

Contact: Clare Willott: 0117 941 4514

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

www.troopers-hill.org.uk