



**Friends of
Troopers Hill**

newsletter August 2005

JOIN US IN SEARCH OF A STORY...

On **Saturday 13th August** we are hosting a Family Picnic Day **from 4.45pm** on the hill. At 5pm prompt join us and international storyteller Cassandra; follow us to a secret location.... where a very special story awaits, inspired by the hill's wildlife. This free event is suitable for all ages but young children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

AND FLY YOUR OWN BALLOON!

A chance to win your very own Radio Controlled Blimp. That's what we are offering you as part of our Balloon Fiesta celebrations. After the storytelling we will be releasing the balloons for our first ever Balloon Race. You can sponsor balloons for £2 a time or 3 for £5 and the more you buy, the more chance you have of winning the prize! We recommend you sponsor your balloons in advance by phoning Susan on 947 5037. All money raised goes to the Friends funds. After this we hope to watch the mass balloon ascent at Ashton Court. Drinks and light snacks will be available. Do come and join us.

HILL MORE CONVENIENT FOR DOGS

Two new dog poo bins have been erected on the Hillside. One just inside the north-east entrance

(next to the Malvern Road Playing field) and one at the bottom next to the Crews Hole Road entrance. Friends hope this will help cut down on the amount of dog fouling on the Hill. They have been paid for by the Bristol Parks Department and installed as a part of the Management Plan that the Friends developed with Bristol Parks last year.

WORKERS MAKE AMENDS

Following the report in the last newsletter about contractors cutting the grass at the wrong time we are glad to report that things are looking up. Over the last few weeks the Hill has been visited several times by the contractors the Council employs to maintain the paths and cut the grass. Their welcome activities mean the Hill is now less littered, its paths are mostly clear of weeds and an abandoned motorbike has been disposed of. If any local residents have issues they would like to draw the Friends attention to, either about the state of the Hill or the activities of the contractors, they should call our contact number shown at the end of this leaflet.

EVENTS ON THE HILL

The Friends have held two free public events on the hill since our last Newsletter was published. On the Bank Holiday Monday at the end of May Helen took us on a very informative walk, identifying

flowering plants, describing how people used them in the past and what they might be used for today. This was a very enjoyable morning; many thanks to Helen.

In June the Friends were joined by the Bristol and District Moth Group to discover some of the hill's most secretive nocturnal wildlife. Light traps were set to attract moths and over eighty different species were recorded, these included a spectacular Elephant Hawk Moth.

The event was very well attended with lots of local children staying up late. As well as moths, we also saw some bats and were able to pick up bats' echolocation using bat detectors. There are photos of this and other past events on our website.

If you attended these events please let us know what you thought. We are also keen to know what sort of events you would like in the future.

FUND RAISING

We've spent all the money we got from the Lottery – the evidence of where it has gone is all over the Hill (no, not the empty beer cans!). We've applied for more money from various places but with no luck as yet. Friends have been dreaming up ways of raising the cash needed to keep the work on the Hill going and to fund the various events that we have planned in the near future. We do not charge entrance for our events but we will in future be inviting donations. We hope to raise some funds from the Balloon Race on the 13th Aug but if you have any

other schemes you think might help us raise funds, please contact us or better still come along to the next group meeting. See below for times and venues.

ANY, ANY, ANY OLD...BOOKS?

Friends are selling second-hand books as one way of raising cash to keep the group afloat. If you have any old volumes you don't want, then don't wait for the Rag and Bone man to call; phone us instead.

NEW PLAY AREA?

Following the survey of your views by questionnaire on the future of the Malvern Road Open Space we are pleased to report that enough of you said you would consider getting involved in the organisation of events there to have a meeting to discuss what to do. This meeting was held in July and decided to hold a further meeting with Bristol Parks to discuss the options for replacing the play equipment. In the survey 81 out of 173 people who replied said they wanted to improve the play area, possibly with a change of site to another part of the open space and fenced off from dogs. If you would like to get involved please contact Susan.

THE MISSING MALVERN ROAD GATE

Those of you who are regular readers of this newsletter will know the story of the gateway at the end of Malvern Road into the field. For those of you who are not we have been promising a new gateway for months (like the one that appeared at the field entry at the end of Summerhill Terrace) and it hasn't yet appeared. The

latest news is that the people who have got the contract to supply the gate have had it for more than 5 weeks at the time of writing. We are therefore expecting them to appear and do the job very soon indeed.

EASY READING

In order to fit in as much as we can in our newsletters we tend to make the print quite small. If you, or anyone you know, would prefer to receive the newsletter in larger print, please let us know as we can happily print them to order for you. Contact Susan to request your copy – details at the end of the newsletter.

FUTURE WORK PARTIES

Recent work parties have been involved in litter picking, clearing bramble, bracken and holm oak saplings. At a work party in the near future (possibly the one in September) it is hoped that the Council will provide some training in Health and Safety issues.

WILDSpace! CONTINUES

The Friends were pleased to hear that English Nature and the Big Lottery Fund have agreed to provide extra money to the Council to allow Sally Oldfield's role as Local Nature Reserve Officer to continue until at least next summer.

GETTING INVOLVED

We would be delighted to see you at any of our meetings. Everyone is welcome and there is **NO** commitment. We need to hear everyone's views, so please join us. The next two are on **Tuesday 9th August and Wed 14th September, both at 7.15pm in the Wesley Memorial Church Hall on Bryants Hill.**

If you fancy a little light exercise and some good company, come along to one of our work parties on the Hill which take place on the **first Saturday of every month at 10am.** The information on the new notice boards on the Hill will provide more detail about dates and meeting places. We do not charge membership fees and do not have a formal membership. Our meetings and events are open to everyone with an interest in Troopers Hill, its wildlife and surroundings.

HOW TO CONTACT US

If you want to contact us about issues raised in this newsletter, or anything else, please use the list below or e-mail us via the web site.

Susan Acton-Campbell (Chair)
Tel. 0117 947 5037 or write to 3,
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**Bristol Council Local Nature
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