



Friends of  
Troopers Hill

# newsletter

Dec. 2004

## THE BENCH IS BACK

The seat at the top of the hill has now had its new metal slats fitted and painted. Thanks to the generous donations from well wishers, we also have some cash left over to help install more seats on the hill.

The Friends of Troopers Hill would love to hear from anyone who has views on where new seats should be placed on the hillside.

## WORK PARTIES ON THE HILL

The November work party on the hill took place on Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup>. As well as clearing the top of the hill of debris left over from the celebrations on the 5<sup>th</sup>, work continued on clearing undesirable bramble from parts of the hill.

The next party on 4<sup>th</sup> December will put up the first of the new signs bought with Lottery money and do more bramble work. At the January Work Party - Sat 8<sup>th</sup> - we shall put up more signs and also hold a Holm Oak hunt. There are a number of small holm oak seedlings appearing on the hill and these need to be removed before they get

too big or too numerous. They are not native to Britain and are evergreen. These trees will, if left unchecked, damage the natural ecology of the hill.

You can see some photos of the November work party on our website at:  
[www.troopers-hill.org.uk](http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk)

## WHY REMOVE BRAMBLE AND OAK?

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the Rupert Higgins photographic vegetation survey of Troopers Hill.

This project involves taking a set of photos of the hill from the same places all over the hill every 2 years. The report is very useful in giving a long term view to help us manage Troopers Hill's natural ecology and it points out where more work is needed.

This year the report shows that the heather, acid grassland and broom are all continuing to flourish and spread all over the hill. Our work parties are helping to encourage this.

However, Rupert has drawn attention to the number of sapling trees sprouting up all over the hill. If left to

themselves, the trees would eventually cover the whole area causing shade that would kill off the natural heather and broom. The woodland would eventually extend over the whole hill. Whilst we all love woodland, it is necessary to take action to remove all trees and smothering bramble from the open area, where they are not wanted, to preserve the natural plants and wildlife.

## FESTIVAL OF NATURE

The Friends of Troopers Hill were pleased to be able to take part in this year's Festival of Nature which was held from 9<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October. We attended the Launch Event at the Council House with a display of photographs and information on our new display boards. The event was well attended and we were able to introduce Troopers Hill to many people from all over Bristol who did not even know that the site exists. More publicity came from a live BBC Radio Bristol interview. It was also a good opportunity to meet other organisations taking part in the Festival. On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October, Rob led a walk covering the Avon Trail, Conham and Dundry Park as well as Troopers Hill.

## LOST BUTTERFLIES

A great debate, amongst Bristol's naturalists, started at the Festival of Nature. The subject was whether an attempt should be made to re-introduce the Grayling Butterfly to Troopers Hill. This butterfly is rare in this region but used to be one of the most important residents on the Hill. It is featured on the sign board at the Greendown entrance and also on the description of Troopers Hill on Bristol City's website. However, there have been no recorded sightings since about 1994 and it is believed that the colony has died out. One theory is that the major hill fire in 1995 may have been the cause. It may also be that this isolated colony, which was probably the only one in Bristol, was too small to be self-sustaining. The first issue of debate is whether re-introduction is feasible. Even if it is feasible then it would take a lot of time and effort to breed enough butterflies. This time and effort may be better spent on other projects if the reintroduced Grayling is not able to survive in the long term. So we need to be reasonably sure that that it has a chance of succeeding before going any further.

It may be that the only way to find out whether the Grayling can thrive on Troopers Hill is to try re-introducing it and then to monitor its progress.

We would be pleased to have your views.

## FUTURE EVENTS

Working parties on the Hill normally happen on the first Saturday of every month and start at 10am until 12am. The December work party will be on **December 4<sup>th</sup>**.

However, as the first Saturday in January will be on the 1<sup>st</sup>, we decided that as an exception to our normal rule the **work party will be held on Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup> January**. So, no need to drag yourself out with a hangover after your New Year's Eve festivities.

The next Friends meeting will be the 2004 AGM. It will take place on **December 14<sup>th</sup>** at the **Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Bryants Hill**, starting at 7pm. There will be refreshments plus slides and videos of what has been happening on the Hill over the last year. Please come along and join in the discussion. Troopers Hill is your hill to share and enjoy and your thoughts are valuable.

The first Friends meeting of 2005 will be on **26<sup>th</sup> January**, again at the **Wesley Memorial Church Hall**.

## TO CONTACT US:

If you want to contact us about issues raised in this

newsletter or anything else please use the list below:

**Susan Acton-Campbell**  
chair@troopers-hill.org.uk  
Tel. 0117 947 5037 or write  
to 3, Corkers Hill, St. George,  
Bristol, BS5 8DT.

**Sally Oldfield**  
**Bristol Council Local**  
**Nature Reserves Officer:**  
sally\_oldfield@bristol-  
city.gov.uk  
Tel. 0117 922 4429

## GETTING INVOLVED

The Friends of Troopers Hill does not charge membership fees and does not have a formal membership. Our meetings and events are open to everyone with an interest in Troopers Hill or its surroundings. If you wish to receive future editions of this newsletter and are not on our mailing list please let Susan have your details. These details will only be used for sending you information about Friends of Troopers Hill and will not be passed to any third party.

If you have an email address, please help us to save money and paper by sending it to: membership@troopers-hill.org.uk.

All future news will then be sent to you by email.