



# newsletter June 2005

## **ACTION PLAN PROGRESS**

It is a year since the Action and Maintenance Plan for Troopers Hill was adopted by Bristol Parks and the Friends of Troopers Hill. We have not achieved everything we have set out to do but overall it has been a successful year. New signs are at the entrances, letting people know that the hill is cared for, and the steps from the second entrance from Troopers Hill are now in frequent use having been cleared and repaired at Work Parties. Less visibly a lot of bramble has been cut back from areas of broom and we have removed a lot of Holm Oak saplings.

This year should see an improvement in the maintenance carried out by Bristol Parks. Rob has had meetings with both Gary Ratcliffe, our Community Parks Manager, and the contractors to agree which paths should be kept clear and which other regular tasks will be undertaken by the contractors.

## **WEBSITE WORKS AGAIN**

Those of you with Internet access may have noticed that the Friends website was out of action for a short while recently. This was due to a problem outside our control but has now been resolved. The website now has a feedback form for you to give us your thoughts together with more

detailed results of the recent "Malvern Road Open Space" survey. There is also a link to the video of the Air Balloon Junior School visit to the hill last March. A "must see".

If you have tried to send us your e-mail address, please resend it. We are very keen to save costs and be environment friendly by putting as many people as possible on our e-mail distribution list for future newsletters. So please let us have your details at:

[membership@troopers-hill.org.uk](mailto:membership@troopers-hill.org.uk)

## **QUARRYING HISTORY**

Rob and Susan of the Friends of Troopers Hill spent the very wet Tuesday after Easter in Bristol Records office looking for information about Troopers Hill.

They found lots of papers collected by local historians in the 1930s and 1950s. Amongst other things these show that when the hill was sold in 1704 it was called "Harris's, alias Truebody's Hill". Harris's Hill was the name used for the hill on the 1610 map of Kingswood Forest. The name "Troopers Hill" seems to have appeared in about 1830.

In the 1920s a newspaper article suggested that the hill, if terraced, could be converted into a delightful park. The papers also referred to a book written

between 1829 and 1831 called "Scenes in our Parish by a Country Parson's Daughter". Rob has a copy of the book, which was actually written by Elizabeth Emra who was the daughter of John Emra vicar at St George Church from 1808 to 1842. The book gives a fascinating insight into life and death, in St George, in the 1830s. It refers to "the barren and quarried hill, with its yellow spots of gorse and broom, and its purple shade of heath, raising itself above the dark heaps of dross"

In September, the Friends of Troopers Hill are hoping to organise an exhibition showing the information they have collected. Everyone is encouraged to bring along any photographs or documents to be scanned and added to our growing archive. If anyone would like to help with research please contact us.

## **BUTTERFLY, BUTTERFLY....**

One inhabitant of Troopers Hill that has not been seen for many years is the Grayling Butterfly. It was last seen on the Hill in 1994 and the reasons for its disappearance have never been established. A breeder recently made an offer to attempt a re-introduction of the species. This caused much discussion at several committee meetings. Eventually it was decided not to proceed with the experiment

because of the impact it might have on other wildlife, including the rare bees that already live on Troopers Hill. Observations will be necessary to follow the progress of any attempt. It is hoped that some students may soon take on some research into the current status of the wildlife on the hill which would prepare the ground for a future attempt. Further monitoring will, however, be necessary and we would be delighted to hear from anybody willing to participate in any future plans.

## **GREENDOWN GAFF**

The Management Plan calls for a hay cut on the grassland at Greendown. This means that the grass shouldn't be cut before mid July to give the wildflowers a chance to seed. The grass cuttings are then removed. Over time the number of wildflowers should increase and the appearance of the area should improve. You may have noticed that the grass was cut this year on 11<sup>th</sup> May – far too early. This was due to a breakdown in communications between the contractor and the person who actually did the work. Following our complaints, the Friends of Troopers Hill have received a personal apology for this from Robert Westlake of Bristol Contract Services. He has assured us that this will not happen again and that only the intended annual hay cuts will be carried out in future.

The Friends of Troopers Hill are always pleased to hear your views on the maintenance of the hill good or bad. Through our contacts with Bristol Parks and the Parks Forum we can

bring pressure to bear when things go wrong, and let them know when things go right.

## **TROOPERS HILL ANNIVERSARY**

Time flies and although you may not have realised it, 22<sup>nd</sup> June sees the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Troopers Hill becoming a Local Nature Reserve. You may like to celebrate it by paying a visit to the Hill to enjoy the wildlife, the fresh air and the view. If it is a sunny day, you might even spot our rare "Mining Bees"!

Why not come along to one of the many other events planned in the next few months?

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of June there will be a **Night-time Moth Hunt**. Starting at 9.30pm it will go until late, using light to trap moths and so identify them as well as special equipment to locate bats by echo. So if any residents see strange lights on the hill that night, there is no need to call the police!

We are joining in the Balloon Fiesta fun again this year with a **Family event** on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> August. The Hill is a terrific place to watch the balloons as they ascend from Ashton Court.

We also have plans for a **"Fungal Foray"** which is scheduled for October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

If you are interested in any of these events then please book a place on them by e-mailing

**friends@troopers-hill.org.uk**

or ring Rob on 0117 9475037 who will be glad to give you more details if necessary.

## **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**

Tel. 0117 947 5037 or write to 3, Corkers Hill, St. George, Bristol, BS5 8DT.

**chair@troopers-hill.org.uk**

**Bristol Council Local Nature Reserves Officer:**

**Sally Oldfield**

Tel. 0117 922 4429

**sally\_oldfield@bristol-city.gov.uk**

## **GETTING INVOLVED**

We would be delighted to see you at any of our meetings. Everyone is welcome and there is **NO** commitment. We like and need to hear everyone's views, so join us at the next one on **Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 7pm 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.

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, its wildlife and surroundings.