



**Friends of
Troopers Hill**

newsletter October 2005

TROOPERS HILL NEEDS YOU

Wednesday, 7th December sees our second AGM. It marks two years since Friends of Troopers Hill was formed and during that time we have organised Dawn Chorus walks, Bat and Moth hunts, History Days, Family Fun Picnics, a Flowering Plant walk and walks for visitors from other groups. We have also repaired fences and gates, put up new signs, cut back brambles to encourage the broom, litter picked, repaired steps, cut bracken (many times) and removed unwanted Holm Oak. In the next year we also hope to organise more walks and family events including a local dog show, a concert on the Hill and family picnics.

We distribute our Newsletter to nearly 300 families. All our activities are free of charge to anyone who cares to attend. We have no formal membership but all of you who receive this Newsletter are members by virtue of your interest in the Hill. To date all of this has been made possible by a small band of less than 20 regular volunteers. If we are to continue the work, we **BADLY NEED MORE SUPPORT**. Spreading the load among more people means no ongoing commitment from volunteers and the demand on each individual is lighter. All we need is 2 hours of your time – 2 hours to attend a work party OR 2 hours to attend one of our regular meetings. So, how about it readers? Just come along to one of the "Dates for your Diary" events listed overleaf. You will be made most

welcome, find out things you never knew about your Hill and you might even enjoy yourself.

Can't make it to a meeting or a work party but still want to help? Ring or email Susan for other ideas, ranging from meetings and work parties on different dates at other times to delivering newsletters in Kingswood, sewing, art and IT.

If you can only come to ONE meeting then please come to the AGM – we need you to tell us how we are doing and what you would like us to do.

WEATHER WOES

Those of you who can see the Hill from your windows might well have been astonished to see a stalwart band of Friends struggling against the torrential rain and wind to set up gazebos for our Family Fun Picnic on 13th. August! The unfortunate weather may have dampened our clothes and boots but not our enthusiasm for the event which was timed to coincide with the Balloon Fiesta. As we had expected, the rain did in fact stop in time for the event itself, which was well attended, especially considering the circumstances. A crowd of adults and children enjoyed fascinating stories involving "fire dragons" and many creatures that live on Troopers Hill. International story teller Cassandra kept everyone involved and warm with the actions and sounds of the

various animals we had to imitate. Later on over 50 balloons were released from the top of the Hill as the first ever Troopers Hill Balloon race got under way. The winning balloon was sponsored by George Melksham and the balloon's card was returned by Oliver Martin from Hampton in Middlesex. An incredible distance of 113 miles!

WALK THE WALK

Friends are currently working on producing a laminated sheet that will guide you around a circular walk. The sheets will cost £1 each and will take in Troopers Hill, the river, Conham Vale and a new walk at Dundridge Park. Known as the Deer Path, the top entrance to their new walk is off the steps down into the Vale. Using the old stone gatepost as a marker, its route goes past an old pond that should eventually be restored for wildlife. It then passes near the old quarry and the bottom end comes out onto Lower Conham Vale just above the cottages. Signposts will soon be erected to help guide walkers.

HILL HISTORY

Thanks to Bristol East Allotments Association for the loan of their Pavilion on Saturday 17th September. A very successful exhibition of documents, maps, objects and photos attracted a wide range of people and more donations to our records. Thank you to those of you who brought photos for scanning, their memories for recording and a wonderful book on the history of

Butlers Tar Works. We do apologise for not including this event in our last newsletter. If you missed the exhibition some of these items will be on display at our AGM and we will hold a similar event next year.

BAGS OF BOOKS

Thank you so much for your generous response to our appeal for books to raise funds. Many of these have gone to the Book Barn and we are eagerly awaiting the results of the first statement. Some booklets rejected by the Book Barn are being sold on Ebay and have so far raised just over £45. More books are always welcome.

A BROTHER FOR THE BENCH?

A shy Friend asked her employer, equally shy and generous, to donate some money towards the work we do on Troopers Hill. A cheque for £200 is currently on its way to us.

We have some ideas on how we would like to spend it. One idea is to add it to the surplus £130 collected by our letter-writing bench and for Friends to build a bench at an organised workshop.

Come along to our next meeting or the AGM and tell us how you would like it spent.

At least two other Friends are approaching their employers for money from as we write. If you are thinking of doing the same thing we would be more than happy to supply you with any information you might need.

MALVERN RD OPEN SPACE

Following on from your responses to the questionnaires about Malvern Rd Open Space, we have had a meeting with Bristol Council's Play Officer and Community Development Officer to find out what support they can offer. All of you who ticked the box saying you would like to receive more information will soon be sent an invitation to attend a meeting to give your ideas about play facilities for Malvern Rd Open Space. The aim will be for John Knowlson, the Play Officer, to gather your thoughts and arrange for designs to be made, at no cost to you. Those designs can then be used, if you wish, for applying for grants. N.B. There is NO funding currently available from Bristol Parks to replace the play area.

If any of you did not return the questionnaire but would like to attend the meeting please phone or email Susan.

GOODBYE GARY, HELLO?

Bristol Parks Community Parks Manager, Gary Ratcliffe, who has done so much to help us is taking a well-deserved break. Many of the repairs you will have noticed, the two new gates on Malvern Rd Open Spaces and the 2 new dog bins are just a few of things that Gary has negotiated for us. A replacement is being appointed to cover his absence but his manager will be attending our next meeting so if there are particularly maintenance issues you want to raise, do come along.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

MUSHROOM MAGIC - Come to a "Fungal Foray" on **Saturday October 22nd at 10 am**. Come along and find out just how many different types of fungus and mushroom we can find on our hill. Learn which ones are good to eat and which ones are poisonous! For safety we have to limit numbers, so do please remember to book a place first either by phoning Rob on 0117 947 5037 or e-mailing friends@troopers-hill.org.uk.

MEETINGS - The next Friends of Troopers Hill meeting is on **Tuesday 18th October** and following that we have our second AGM on **Wednesday 7th December**. Both are at **7.15pm in the Wesley Memorial Church Hall on Bryants Hill**. Please come.

WORK PARTIES - Our work parties on the Hill take place on the **first Saturday of every month at 10am** and we **DO need your help!** The next work party is on **Saturday, 5th November**. We meet at **10am at the entrance on the corner of Greendown and Troopers Hill Rd**.

HOW TO CONTACT US

If you want to talk to us about issues raised in this newsletter, or anything else, please contact:
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