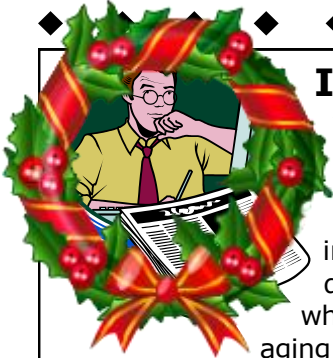


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# The Friends of Troopers Hill



Winter 2008



It was with great sadness that friends had to say goodbye to Sally Oldfield who has left Bristol Parks Department to go and work with Islington Council in London. For those of you that did not know her, it was Sally who was responsible for encouraging the formation of the Friends of Troopers Hill (FoTH), for guiding our first footsteps and for working with us, and other groups she helped start up, to run Nature in the City projects. She will be greatly missed, but we all wish her well and every success in her new post.

Sunday October 12th was our first ever dog show. You can see a review of it elsewhere in our newsletter, but we would especially like to say a big "Thank You" to all the volunteers who turned out once more to help it run so smoothly and successfully. It was a very slick operation and all the visiting agencies and charities were extremely impressed. Richard Thomas, the Dog Warden, was even heard to mutter that Friends erected his gazebo quicker and more efficiently than the wardens themselves do!



On February 26th, the St George History Group are having a meeting in the Summerhill Senior Citizens Club, Summerhill Rd (opposite the St. George Baptist church). They will be having a talk on the history of Crew's Hole Road, including memories from a former resident. It starts at 7.30 pm and admission is £1.50. Several FoTH members will be there as Crew's Hole Road is heavily involved with the history of Troopers Hill and it promises to be an extremely interesting evening.

Another very active and successful year has passed for FoTH, and we would all like to wish you, our readers and Friends, a Happy and Peaceful Christmas. May 2009 be as successful for FoTH and all of you as 2008 was for us.

 **Merry Christmas** 

## Forum is on the Move

Our online forum can be very busy at times. As it was coming up for renewal, and at Roger's suggestion, we hunted around and found a new one that would not cost Friends money to run. The new forum will be live by the time you receive this and, as before, is available through our website or direct at:

<http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/forum.html>

Though it looks a little more complicated than the old forum, it is very much more capable. You don't *have* to register but if you do you can edit your messages at any time and you can, for example, send emails directly through the forum or upload your "Avatar".

The forum has proved very useful and has allowed a healthy exchange of views in the past. We look forward to seeing much more discussion in the future.

## Dates for your Diary

**Saturday 10th January:** Work Party. 10 am until midday. Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown.

**Tuesday 13th January:** 7.15pm. Meeting. Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Bryant's Hill. All are welcome. We need your thoughts.

**Saturday 7th February:** Work Party. 10 am until midday. Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown

**Sunday Wednesday 4th March:** 7.15pm. Meeting. Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Bryant's Hill. All are welcome. We need your thoughts.

**Saturday 7th March:** Work Party. 10 am until midday. Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown.

**Saturday 4th April:** Work Party. 10 am until midday. Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown.

**Sunday 19th April:** Avon Valley Walk. 10 am — 4 pm. A guided walk through Conham, Dundridge Park, Troopers Hill, St. Anne's Woods, Nightingale Valley & Eastwood Farm, finishing at Beeses Bar & Tea Rooms. Meet at Conham car park. 5 miles long walk, no need to book.

## Other Events

**Thursday 15th January:** Tai Chi. 7pm, Wesley Memorial Church Hall. First of 10 weekly lessons. Contact Bristol School of Tai Chi for further details—01179493955

**Friday 10th April:** Good Friday Service on the Hill, organised by local Churches. Procession starts 11.30 am from Summerhill Methodist Church.

[www.troopers-hill.org.uk](http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk)



## COMMENT

**A**s you will have read elsewhere, our founder and mentor, Sally Oldfield, has moved on from Bristol after many successful years. Our loss is Islington's gain.

**B**efore she left she was in the process of applying for a grant to maintain her post for another two years. That application is still being processed and Bristol City Council Parks Department is currently intending to recruit a replacement for Sally in the spring *if the grant application is successful*. Therein lies the rub.

**W**e would like to make it clear just how crucial the Friends of Troopers Hill (FoTH), along with other parks support groups, consider Sally's role was. Without Sally as Local Nature Reserve Officer (LNRO), FoTH would not be in existence and there is a need for similar support to help create other Friends groups elsewhere around the city.

**T**hen there is the crucial role she played in helping raise funding from grants. FoTH was greatly assisted in the early stages of applying for grants by Sally as LNRO. As a group we are now experienced enough and big enough to apply for our own grants successfully, but at least one other Friends group we know of has already missed out on around £10,000 of grant funding, arguably because there was no Sally in place to assist with their application.

**O**n top of that, there was the funding for Nature in the City events (NITC), the role Sally fulfilled more recently. We recently held meetings to plan our events calendar for next year. We are fortunate that our successful fundraising has enabled us to fund some of the events that were funded by NITC previously, but we cannot take on all of them. Many of our events require a council officer to attend for insurance purposes and without one we cannot run them either. All of this is evidenced by the thinner schedule for FoTH events next year. We no longer have a panel in this publication to advise you of NITC events, since there are none.

**T**here are many changes taking place in the structure of Bristol Parks department and some of the newly created roles may take on some of the functions that Sally used to fulfil. However, no-one should be under any illusion about how important we and the other groups consider it that a replacement for Sally in some form is found, even if it has to be funded by the Council, that support is adequate and that all the good work in building the Friends groups is not squandered.

## The Friends of Troopers Hill Dog Show



**W**ell what an enjoyable day! The weather certainly played a large part - glorious sun! Who would have believed it for October.



**I**t was great having so many keen helpers setting up the show, and at first there seemed to be just a trickle of dogs but then the next time I looked the field seemed full. I guess having a free event brought out every-

one. Normally people tend to enter 1 or 2 classes, but we had them entering as many as they could. Suddenly making them very large.

**T**his then poses a problem for the judges as it makes their decisions twice as hard! But they kept smiling...

**P**ersonally I thought it was great to see so many different



breeds turn up, and lots of families who had never entered their beloved pet in a show before. What a surprise it was for them if they won a rosette, and what a thrill if they came first!!

**W**e had such positive feedback from people and everyone seemed to really enjoy the day.

**T**hanks to all the Friends of Troopers hill for all their hard work. Hopefully see you next year.

*Julie Walker*

## Letters to the Editor

I should like to extend a very belated thank you to you and your team for the £100.00 donation you made, via Julie Walker following your recent Fun Dog Show.

In addition to this we took a further £94.50 on our stall which all made a very welcome addition to our funds.

I say very welcome as this year has proved to be a difficult one for us with a record number of unwanted and abandoned animals needing our help as well as several desperate owners who are having problems meeting the financial needs of their pets in this economic climate.

The other side of this situation is that people are becoming increasingly wary of taking on a pet so our foster homes are full to the brim with dogs, cats, kittens and rabbits who we, are unable to re-home but who still need to be fed and who often require veterinary treatment.

As I am sure you can see this is quite a drain on our coffers which is why donations such as yours are so gratefully received.

On a personal note I should like to say how much I enjoyed the day and how friendly and helpful I found all the 'Friends' to be and how I hope this event will be repeated and that we can again be a part of it.

Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely  
Ange Buckingham,  
Homing and Emergency Animal Rescue Team  
(HEART) <http://www.heartrescue.org.uk/>

If you'd like to talk to us about any issues raised in this newsletter, 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**  
Email:

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

Or go to the online forum at:

<http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/forum.html>

To book a place on an event,  
Phone Judith: 0117 955 9819 Or email:

[events2009@troopers-hill.org.uk](mailto:events2009@troopers-hill.org.uk)

## Green Spaces are Good for You!



**A** recent report published in "The Lancet", the world's leading general medical journal, produces proof (if it were needed) that living near parks and woodland boosts people's health.

**T**he links between poverty and serious illness are already recognised. Frank Popham, of the University of St. Andrews, and Richard Mitchell, of Glasgow University, obtained the cause of death of over 360,000 people in the UK, who died under retirement age between 2001 and 2005. When they analysed all deaths, they discovered that the gap in health between the rich and poor in the least green areas of the country seems to be about twice as much as in the greener areas, particularly when looking at deaths due to circulatory disease. Greener areas includes all forms of nature be it parks, playing fields, nature reserves or woods.

*"Populations that are exposed to the greenest environments have the lowest levels of health inequality related to income deprivation,"* they say. Contact with green environments promote physical activity, evidence suggests.

**T**hey go on to add:

*"However, the effect of green space is not solely based on promotion or enhancement of physical activity. Several studies have shown that contact (either by presence or visual) with green spaces can be psychologically and physiologically restorative, reducing blood pressure and stress levels and possibly promoting faster healing in patients after surgical intervention"* All good news for those of us lucky enough to be living near Troopers Hill!

**M**aking a point that underlines the importance of the BCC Parks and Green Spaces Strategy, they conclude:  
*"The implications of this study are clear: environments that promote good health might be crucial in the fight to reduce health inequalities"*

**A**s a final comment, Dr. Mitchell goes on to remark:

*"We would encourage the Government to consider carefully what their policy on green spaces is and to bear this research in mind when planning urban areas for the future"*

## Reduce – Reuse – Recycle

We are all encouraged to minimise the amount of discarded items that would eventually go into landfill. Bearing in mind the Three R's of Waste Disposal "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" helps us towards this aim. This article considers opportunities for reusing things that would otherwise be thrown away. By adopting some of these ideas, we have reduced the amount of waste from our house that goes into both the wheelie bin and recycling box.

Before throwing anything out, it is worth asking, 'can this item be re-used for another purpose – either by me or someone else?' We find that the majority of items that end up in the wheelie bin are plastic. Plastic bottles can be taken to recycling points such as the one at St Georges' Park – for other locations see <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/Environment-Planning/Rubbish-waste-and-recycling/recycling-centre-finder.en>

The top third of a plastic bottle can be cut off and inverted to form a funnel; the lower two-thirds can be used as a flower vase or upside down as a cloche to protect a garden plant. A collection of plastic bottle tops in a range of different colours was donated to a pre-school for the children to use in sorting and counting activities. Clear or coloured deep plastic containers that originally held meat or vegetables (e.g. mushrooms) can be washed and redeployed as aids to organizing drawers or kitchen shelves. For instance, soup packets will stack tidily within a plastic tray so you can pull the whole thing out and see straight away what flavours you have. The containers can form drawer dividers keeping batteries, loose change, hair rollers, medications, etc tidily sorted in separate compartments. Small items of clothing (socks, ties, handkerchiefs) can also be neatly stored this way.

A lot of our rubbish is waste paper and cardboard. Apart from newspapers and magazines which can be recycled, it is worth knowing that paper tissues and card can be added to the compost heap in reasonable amounts. It is greener to use washable kitchen cloths than paper kitchen roll. However, any used kitchen paper can also be composted. Other things that can go on the compost heap include old 100% cotton (such as T-shirts, old towels) or woollen fabric, combings of pet or human hair, and eggshells.

Lavatory and kitchen roll tubes (and egg boxes) can be used for starting seedlings, then planted in the ground without disturbing the roots. Lar-

ger sheets of cardboard (from pizza, cereal, wine or bigger boxes) can be weighted down as a weed suppressing mulch on bare ground awaiting cultivation, then dug in once it has weathered away. If you don't have a garden, you might think about offering the items to someone you know who is a gardener or has an allotment.

I could share additional ideas along these lines, but a far more valuable source I have discovered recently is the web site [www.selfsufficientish.com](http://www.selfsufficientish.com). The site is hosted from Bristol by Andy and Dave Hamilton and attracts contributions from around the world, including the Antipodes. I would particularly recommend the web site's forum for more suggestions on how to keep stuff out of landfill.

*Bryn Friallen*

Hello Troopers.

Aren't these frosty mornings just beautiful on The Hill? I'm not sure of the exact elevation (254 feet above sea level—Ed) but the views from the top on a clear morning are really panoramic. If the sun catches it just right then Penn Hill mast, above the City of Wells, can shine like a beacon. There was a chap, late the other morning, busily setting up his tripod to take some photos as the sun beamed down. Sadly he was a little too late as the mist was already beginning to rise in the river valley as the frost burnt off and the day became hazy. Of course the thing to do then is scuttle off to Eastwood Farm to enjoy the mist rising off the river and lagoon.

It's been an interesting year on the hill during which our labours have begun to bear fruit. Those who have read [Nick Hudson's report](#) on the areas cleared of bramble will note that some heathland plant species have emerged now that they are no longer suppressed, and that some re-colonisation is slowly beginning to occur. Where necessary, the expected explosion of Japanese knotweed succumbed to early applications of glyphosate, and the persistent bracken bashing is showing signs of working, without resorting to chemical control.

The team regard TH as our little bit of the Scottish Highlands in Bristol, and that's just where I'm off to again for Hogmanay. Top left hand corner of the UK where the mountains are named after racehorses. There's the bonus of an excellent chocolatier in Durness... (and some nice scenery and distilleries en route)... some may even survive the journey home.

Cheers,

Jules

