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The Friends of Troopers Hill

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Autumn 2009



One way or another it's been a very active summer for friends this year. Or maybe that should be one way *and* another since our membership secretary Helen proudly took our latest green flag and the [FOTH batik](#) (created for us by our young friends at Air Balloon Hill Junior School) with her when she took her place on the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square. She tells you more about this experience elsewhere, but it made us all very proud to see both of them being displayed to viewers all around the world.

For the third year running Troopers Hill has been the successful winner of a [Green Flag Award](#). As you will no doubt be aware, the flag is awarded to parks and green spaces in a similar way to blue flags are awarded to beaches. It is not a competition with other green spaces, but rather signifies that Troopers Hill (TH) achieves a high benchmark in quality. In fact the judges have made it clear that TH more than meets that bench-mark in many ways, not least because of the very active and close involvement of the local community in supporting our local nature reserve. That means us and we would very much like to thank all the Friends who have helped out in so many ways to improve the condition of Troopers Hill over the last three years.



Recently, perhaps the most important influence on TH has been our parkie, Jules Thomas. (centre above) No doubt some of you will have noticed his recent absence from the hill. Unfortunately, Jules recently suffered several heart attacks — which surprised the Friends enormously as we all thought he was one of the fittest people we know. We are pleased to say that he survived and is now recovering well at home, with the help of a pace-maker. Jules, we wish you all the very best and a speedy recovery to full health. We miss you enormously, not least at our meetings, and hope you are able to return to active service soon.

Also, we have to mention the legion of dog walkers and other walkers who regularly pick up litter and rubbish on the Hill. It really does make a huge difference and we know that Jules very much appreciates it as well. Please do bring your dogs along to our second Family Fun Dog Show on Troopers Hill field on Sunday October 11th from 2 pm. As last year, all classes are free to enter and are very kindly sponsored by [Beeses Bar and Tea Gardens](#). It's great fun and we expect to have some fun things for you and your dog to take part in. So, see you there.

Troopers Hill Information Line Launched

The Friends of Troopers Hill have launched a dedicated information line to help keep you informed about current events. As well as directions to help those trying to find Troopers Hill for the first time, it will give information about current and future events. If you are uncertain if an event is going to take place because of weather concerns for instance, you will be able to phone the information line and hear an automated message that will tell you if it has been cancelled.

The dedicated number for this service is:

0753 161 5983

The designs for the new **Troopers Hill Field Play Area** have been finalised and the work should be beginning soon. The latest plans reflect local residents concerns and can be viewed on our website here:

<http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/field/DesignJuly09.jpg>

The dance of the dog bins

Thanks to a grant of £520 from the St George Neighbourhood Partnership and Bristol Parks agreeing to empty it, we were able to pay for a new dog bin. This then led to a little dance of the dog bins, so the right sized dog bin was in the right place.

The big black bin at Greendown, not thought a thing of beauty by local residents, did a hop, skip, jump and a dosey doe up to Summerhill Terrace to take the larger amounts of waste that arrive there. The green bin from Summerhill Terrace did a Jack and Jill and rolled down the hill to the next entrance down from Greendown on Troopers Hill Rd. The new green bin is discretely installed at the Greendown entrance.

This means that three of the four roadside entrances from Troopers Hill Rd all have dog bins. If anyone knows where we might be able to raise money for a fourth dog bin, please let us know.

Susan Acton-Campbell

Music on the Hill

A glorious summer evening was had by all on Saturday June 20th at the third 'Music on the Hill' event held on Troopers Hill.

The fine repertoire of music was provided by the Bristol Concert Wind Band, and arguably, this must have been one of the more unusual locations they have played at: high up on the Hill overlooking the City of Bristol and out towards the Mendips. The sun was shining and the wind was gentle, ensuring that the musicians' sheet music didn't fly off of their stands this year!

It was good to see such a wide range of people, from toddlers to teenagers to those of a more well-established age!

People brought along their camping chairs, picnic blankets and hampers full of goodies to the event and everyone fully enjoyed the musical delights that were provided.

Bristol Parks' Playfinder team were also on-site, providing an opportunity to discuss the proposals for the new play facilities on Troopers Hill Field. The Friends of Troopers Hill also set-up a gazebo, displaying a



range of information, such as leaflets and old photographs, so that more people could come along and find out a little bit more about the Local Nature Reserve.

Laura Gosling

Troopers Hill Goes to the Fourth Plinth

Of the four plinths in Trafalgar Square, only three ever had statues put in place. In recent years the fourth plinth has had a succession of different, temporary art projects on display. When Antony Gormley was asked to make a contribution, he conceived the One and Other project. The project consists of a different person taking their place on the plinth for one hour, every hour for 100 days. So far there have been over 30,000 applicants for one of those places, and on Tuesday 4th August, our secretary, Helen

Gillard, was proud to be one of the 2400 successful chosen ones and duly took her place. We talked to her about her experience:

Q: So, Helen, what made you want to participate in the project?

A: I've been aware of Antony Gormley's constructions of figures in a landscape for some time, notably the Angel of the North. I have also been conscious of some of the ways in which the 'empty plinth' in Trafalgar Square has been used for artistic installations. When I learned about a project combining the two that needed volunteers, it crossed my mind that not enough people would sign up (how wrong could I be?) and I felt I might be sorry to miss this once in a lifetime chance.



Q. How were you chosen?

A. I registered an interest early on - in the spring. The 'plinthers' were drawn with regard to representing region and age group. I figured that given the demographics I stood a reasonable chance of being picked. In fact I didn't get a place in the first draw but was successful in the second round.

Q. How did you feel beforehand?

A. I have no particular fear of heights and I had rehearsed my yoga practice in a comparable space, so I expected to be comfortable. I was fairly confident that I would have a peaceful time doing something I enjoy, that might be nice for people to look at, to play a part in a cultural event and attract some publicity for Troopers Hill.

Q. What was it like on the Plinth?

A. Pretty dismal really. I was allocated an early morning slot 5.00 to 6.00 am (no choice). The organisers wanted me to be there an hour and a half beforehand to complete some formalities. I don't react well to lack of sleep so understandably I wasn't feeling too great. During my hour the sky changed from dark grey to light grey. The weather wasn't too chilly but it started to rain towards the end of the hour. I couldn't do some of the things I had planned because looking up at the sky there was no frame of reference, so I would get dizzy. Fortunately, I was able to make a good show of the [Green Flag](#) and the FOTH batik cloth, so that part of the appearance was a success.

Q. What was the best thing about your hour?

A. The chance to bring Troopers Hill and Friends' work with Bristol Parks to the attention of a wide audience. That and the feeling of relief when they came to take me off the plinth at the end!

Q. But is it art?

A: When considering the answer to this question, my view is that there are all kinds of arts. I would not envisage this project could be classified in the restricted category of Fine Arts. But to my mind, if you accept film, stage, street and other performances as Art, then the One and Other project obviously qualifies. By another definition, if that which is created by an artist is art, and Antony Gormley is generally accepted as an artist of merit, there's another reason to call his project Art.

Q. Would you do it again?

A. Quite honestly, No.

Bryn Friallen

Recycling on your doorstep

Do you have a food waste bin? Are you recycling everything that you can? Bristol City Council launched a campaign this summer to make it easier for residents to make the most of their recycling collection services.

Recycling door-steppers have been visiting many homes across the Henleaze, Horfield St

George, Eastville, Bishopston, Ashley, Frome Vale, and Lockleaze areas. The specially trained staff have been giving people tips on recycling and letting them know exactly what they can put in their brown food waste bin and black box. Residents in selected areas will also receive a free roll of compostable corn starch liners to line their brown bin with. The door-steppers will be clearly recognisable — just look out for the orange 'Recycle Now' branded clothing.



Executive Member for Environment and Community Safety, Bristol City Councillor Gary Hopkins, says: "We want to make it as easy as possible for people to recycle everything they can. By getting our team of recycling experts out into the streets, we can give people the advice they need right on their own doorstep and answer any questions they have. We also have compostable brown bin liners to give out in a number of areas to show how clean and easy it can be to recycle food waste with them."

"If you already make the most of our recycling schemes, please spread the word to your friends and neighbours to help make sure everyone is using them. Thanks to Bristol residents' efforts we have the highest recycling rates of any major city in the country - this campaign will help people recycle even more to ensure we meet our target of 50% recycling by the end of 2010."

The results of the doorstep campaign will be analysed - including seeing what effect free compostable liners for brown bins has on organic recycling - and the information will be used by the city council to help plan future recycling campaigns.

Review of the Year 2009

Sunday 6th December at 3 pm will be your opportunity to come and find out more about what has been happening on Troopers Hill this year. There will be a talk, some videos and a slide show of the highlights to illustrate some of the activities that have taken place throughout the year. After the review, we will be holding our AGM.

We decided on a Sunday afternoon event this year as it was felt it may be a more convenient time for a lot of people. The venue will be the Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Bryant's Hill.



Rupert Higgins identifies a Beastie!

For once, the Balloon Fiesta weekend weather smiled upon us this year, and our Bugs & Beasties event was a big success –especially with the kids. Many different bugs were caught, identified and then set free again. The icing on the cake was the Red Arrows display over Ashton Court and then the wonderful balloon ascent in the evening.

ABC of Troopers Hill

B is also for Bees. According to the recent invertebrate survey, Troopers Hill provides a habitat for a number of nationally scarce bees. The list includes the tawny mining bee (*Andrena fulvago*) and *Andrena humilis*, which is a slightly larger brown bee. These mining bees are solitary and do not live in social colonies. The female bee typically creates a tunnel in the ground, or in a vertical bank, lays an egg in one or more cells, in the tunnel, leaves some food for the resulting larva, seals each cell and departs. The holes in the ground made by mining bees can be seen on Troopers Hill in the spring and early summer. Also among the bees recorded on Troopers Hill is the small black and red cuckoo-bee (*Sphecodes crassus*). As its name suggests, it behaves like the cuckoo bird. The female lays its eggs in cells made by another bee, the emerging larvae eat the food provided for the original inhabitant and sometimes the other larvae as well. Solitary bees such as these are either stingless or have very weak stings which they are unlikely to use, and then only rarely in self-defence.

Bryn Friallen

Friends of Troopers Hill: Dates for your Diary

Saturday 3rd October: Work Party. 10 am—midday. Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown. *Come along and help us look after the nature on Troopers Hill. Then join us for a cup of coffee and some relaxing conversation.*

Sunday 11th October: Family Fun Dog Show 2 pm, A fun event on Troopers Hill Field that we hope all local dogs and dog owners will want to attend. Free entry to all classes for dogs of all shapes and sizes.

Tuesday 10th November: Meeting. 7.15—9 pm. Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Bryants Hill. *Come along and share your views with us. We don't bite!*

Saturday 7th November: Work Party. As 3rd October

Saturday 5th December: Work Party. As 3rd October

Sunday 6th December: Lichen and Mosses Walk. 10.30 am. Join expert Justin Smith in a hunt for some of the most overlooked wildlife on Troopers Hill. Booking essential.

Sunday 6th December: Slide Show and Video Review of 2009. 3 pm. Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Bryants Hill. Join us for the story of the year and afterwards for our AGM.

Contacts

For the latest news and updates, phone our

Information line: 0753 161 5983

If you'd like to talk to us, 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

Or go to the online forum at:

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

To report incidents on Troopers Hill, phone
Bristol Parks: 0117 922 3719

Report criminal activity to the police on 999
or

Police local beat manager, Peter Crawford ,
can be contacted on 07919628304