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# The Friends of Troopers Hill

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Autumn 2012



Still time for you to book your place on our ever popular [Avon Valley walk](#). Starting at 10am on Sunday 23rd September, the walk is approx 5 miles long and takes in St Anne's Woods, Nightingale Valley, Eastwood Farm, Conham Vale, Dundridge Park and, of course, Troopers Hill.

Along the way you can either take a picnic, to eat at Eastwood farm, or book your lunch at [Beeses](#). There are still a few remaining places, but you must book in advance — see contact panel on back page.

For the sixth year in a row, Troopers Hill has been awarded a [Green Flag](#). It is also still the only Local Nature Reserve in Bristol to have been awarded one. This is not least due to your support for the Friends of Troopers Hill. One of the measures for a Green Flag is community involvement and Troopers Hill always scores highly on this point. Thank you for helping us win it again. Now for the seventh.

Friends have recently been disturbed by the appearance of holes apparently being dug all over the Hill. We believe this may be the work of someone using a metal detector. It wouldn't be so bad if whoever is doing it filled them in again, but just to be clear, Parks Department tell us that Metal Detecting is not allowed on ANY of their sites. Offenders should be reported to the police and will face prosecution!

We were very pleased to welcome a group of volunteers from [Badminton School](#) on a very hot afternoon in September. They did a tremendous job clearing out bramble and saplings which encourages the broom and heather. Both are important to the ecosystem on Troopers Hill and are part of what makes the Hill so special.

October is going to be a busy month for us. A work party on the first Saturday of the month, the [Dog Show](#) on Sunday 14th and an event to celebrate the completion of the [Stepping Forward grant](#) on Saturday 20th. As ever the dog show will have lots to see and do, and we have a fun new class to test how well your dog sits on command. You will see elsewhere that Peter Margerum will be helping us make musical instruments out of metal and wood bits for the celebration event. So we need any old copper pipe, wire and wood that you can spare. Bring it along on the day, or give Susan a call for us to collect it. Details in contact panel.

## Troopers Hill Celebration Event Saturday October 20<sup>th</sup> 2012

Visitors to our launch event will be able to take part in making a selection of hand-held 'Industrial' sound/musical instruments to celebrate the opening ceremony of the new sculpture trail.

The instruments will include shakers, rattles and scrapers.

The instruments will be made from a combination of copper pipe and fittings, copper wire and natural wood.

These materials will make links to the area's history of copper smelting, the Small Copper butterfly that is commonly seen on Troopers Hill, and the site's woodland areas.

*Peter Margerum*

## The Friends of Troopers Hill Family Fun Dog Show

Prizes & Rosettes given up to 3rd place **2012** Register from 1.30pm Judging starts at 2  
Sunday 14th October  
Troopers Hill Field, Malvern Road

All classes free

The Dog Show encourages responsible dog ownership. Please keep your dog on a lead when not competing and clean up after them. You are responsible for your pet at all times



For further details, contact Susan on 0117 947 5037 or friends@troopers-hill.org.uk For directions and latest information, check information line: 0753 161 5983

Individual dogs may only be entered for a total of 4 classes

Classes:

- 1 Prettiest Bitch
- 2 Most Handsome Dog
- 3 Cutest Puppy
- 4 Best Sit on Command Knockout
- 5 Best Child Handler (under 12)
- 6 Waggiest Tail
- 7 Best Fetch/Retrieve
- 8 Best Jubilee Fancy Dress Dog



LUCAS Veterinary Surgeons



Face painting by: Caring at Christmas



www.troopers-hill.org.uk

## Success of Green Flag Award

The [Green Flag Award](#) is a nationally recognised standard that offers an opportunity for benchmarking the quality of our parks and the services they provide. Much like the Blue Flags on beaches and Purple Flags in city centres, the Green Flag Award helps to create public recognition of good quality green space. The award aspires to raise expectations of what a public green space can provide.

Since successfully achieving Green Flag Awards for The Downs and Troopers Hill in 2007, the Parks & Estates management team has gained knowledge and experience of the methodology that makes the spirit of Green Flag a success.

Bristol City Council has been able to share its knowledge as well as learn new ways of working through the Green Flag application and judging process, which brings together a range of different expertise both within Bristol and from the visiting judges themselves. Most judges are drawn from local authorities or wider green space sector – such as country parks, ecology sites, nature reserves, cemeteries, botanical gardens, Millennium greens and neighbourhood parks, as well as traditional mixed urban parks. Without participation in the Green Flag programme, Bristol would not have the same access to such expert scrutiny outside our own system and thus would not reap the benefits.

Bristol City Council, along with immeasurable enthusiasm and dedication from 'Friends of' Groups and other volunteers, has been able to progress from two Awards in 2007 to 11 today. To establish 11 sites, investment in both infrastructure and management plans has been necessary and will ensure the quality standard is sustainable. However, considering the current economic climate, we are looking to take the knowledge and experience gained from the Green Flag Awards to sustain the current Green Flag parks, and apply the same criteria to our day-to-day management as a standard across the city.

Listed below are a few of the Green Flag management activities practiced as a standard throughout the city:

- How to create a sense that people are positively welcomed in to a green space.
- How best to ensure that the site is a safe and healthy environment.
- What people can expect to find in the way of standards of cleanliness, facilities and maintenance.
- How a green space can be managed in environmentally sensitive ways.
- The value of conservation and care of historic heritage.
- Ways of encouraging community involvement.
- Methods of promoting or marketing a site.

- How to reflect all the above in a coherent and accessible management plan, statement or strategy.

While the capacity to develop green spaces to the full extent of the Green Flag Award is limited, where opportunities arise the values gained from the Green Flag Awards will structure the approach.

*Richard Stransom, Grounds Maintenance Manager,  
Parks Operations, Bristol City Council*

### ABC of Troopers Hill

**M** is for moss.

Mosses are a class of non-flowering plants, looking structurally similar to higher plants but in miniature. They have well-developed stem and leaf structure, typically with a fully or partly developed midrib on the leaf.

The majority of mosses need a damp environment in which to live and reproduce. Different species have varying shade tolerance. The habitats in which mosses may be found range from damp, shady wooded areas and the sides of streams, to sunny, seasonally dry places such as alpine rocks or sand dunes. They also occur in urban situations, for instance, between paving stones, on roofs and walls, and in gardens. Around 800 species of moss live in the UK. Surveys of the mosses on Troopers Hill have named twelve species of moss, the predominant one being [Polytrichum juniperinum](#) (Juniper Haircap Moss).

Species found on Troopers Hill also include, amongst others, [Dicranella heteromalla](#), a moss typical of acidic sites, [Tortula muralis](#) (Wall Screw-Moss), [Campylopus flexuosus](#) (Rusty Swan-Neck Moss) and [Kindbergia praelongum](#) (Common Feather-Moss).

The tiny, but colourful Bristly Haircap Moss ([Polytrichum piliferum](#)) is depicted on the [Hill Wildlife](#) web page. In 2006, a relatively rare moss was identified, called [Polytrichum commune var commune](#). This moss had not been previously found growing either on Troopers Hill or in the wider Bristol area. It can grow up to 40cm high, which is relatively large for a moss (most only reach between 1cm and 10cm in height).

*Bryn Friallen*

### Don't miss your Chance!

Register now to vote in the November elections. On 15th November 2012 Bristol will vote for its first elected mayor and a Police and Crime Commissioner.

Don't miss your chance to vote in these important elections. Anyone over 18 who lives in Bristol may be able to vote but only if you register now.

Just fill in the registration form that came through your door. If the details are right you can just call on 0808 284 1561 or visit [bristol.gov.uk/vote](http://bristol.gov.uk/vote) to confirm them.

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

## Is Troopers Hill a Park?

One of the comments that we hear from time to time is that Troopers Hill is not a park and that it shouldn't be 'parkified'. Yet the Hill is managed by 'Bristol Parks' and we have a 'Community Park Keeper'. Friends of Troopers Hill is a member of the 'Bristol Parks Forum'. So is Troopers Hill a Park?



A Formal Park

The answer of course is in how you define a 'park'. Those who worry about the Hill being too 'parkified' are clearly thinking of traditional or formal parks such as St George Park rather than spaces such as the Peak District National Park. Wikipedia has the definition that I prefer; 'A park is a protected area, in its natural or semi-natural state, or planted, and set aside for human recreation and enjoyment, or for the protection of wildlife or natural habitats.'

In its [Parks & Green Spaces strategy](#), Bristol City Council classified all the publicly accessible green space in Bristol as 'Natural', 'Formal', or 'Informal'. A fourth category was for areas specifically set aside for children's play. Troopers Hill [LNR](#) and the Woodland are both Natural green spaces.

Troopers Hill is also a designated 'Local Nature Reserve'. [Natural England](#) say on their website\* that 'Local authorities, often in partnership with other bodies, manage Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) to maintain and enhance their special wildlife and geology and provide access to nature for local communities.' So while maintaining and enhancing wildlife on Troopers

hill is vital it is also important that as many people as possible from the local community are able to visit and enjoy that wildlife.

Maintaining the right balance between people and wildlife has been the aim of the [Management Plan for Troopers Hill](#) that we agreed with Bristol Parks and was also foremost in our minds in the Stepping Forward Project. It helps people to get around the site if the steps are not too high and if there are some seats so that they can take a rest. However, too many benches, tarmac paths and handrails would spoil the appearance of the site for everyone. Keeping the right balance is also important in the day to day management. Paths should be kept clear so that everyone can use them but without the path edges being mown as they would be in a formal park.

Managing to 'maintain and enhance' wildlife also needs a balance to be struck between different habitats and can be misinterpreted. Cutting down self seeded trees (as was done in 2007), removing saplings and clearing bramble are all tasks that might be done in a formal park to improve its appearance. On Troopers Hill these are done to protect the most important and endangered habitat, the [heathland](#) and acid grassland and the invertebrates that depend on them.



A Park?

So is Troopers Hill a park? As a green space for people and wildlife in a busy city - yes it is. Are we aiming to make Troopers Hill into a formal park (as was suggested in the 1920s)? NO, we certainly are not!

*Rob Acton-Campbell*

\*<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/lnr/default.aspx>

## Jules's Diary

Hello Troopers.

Well, assuming that I've sneaked under the wire of the deadline this time, the Summer of Sport will be over by the time you read this. Wasn't it great? Even if the epithet 'summer' is pushing it a bit.

But maybe, despite the records, the summer wasn't that bad. Didn't seem it on the Hill. Though, as many will attest, it's not the place to be in the middle of, during a downpour! Having said that it's sometimes nice to get the Lear experience, and the Hill is a good place for that... "Blow wind! And crack your cheeks.." but then, I'm a bit of a Bardophile, and if I didn't like getting wet occasionally I'd get an office job.

The new drainage system of the field seemed to hold up pretty well and the new steps made an interesting series of cascades on occasion. Lots of kids (or should that be young people?) gathered to celebrate the Jubilee as in days of yore, and a fair weather day that was. As too was the Balloon Fiesta weekend, though the balloons decided on a different route.

Anyside up there's been some changes, we've allowed the Hill to roughen up a little this year in response to some criticism that it was becoming too parkified in places. A network of paths through the adjacent woodland has been waymarked, thankfully not by me! I collected those posts (a saga in itself) and was grateful that I did not have to lug them into the woods along with the concrete etc. Well Done those people! Some new interpretive signs have been installed as well (for those readers who rarely get to visit, regulars must think I'm "stating the \*\*\*\*\* obvious" as Basil would say).

So despite and because of the weather a good summer!

Cheers

jules



Thanks to the grant from the Big Lottery, this new interpretation board has been installed by the lower chimney as part of the [Stepping Forward project](#).

## Dates for your Diary

### Regular events:

**Work Parties:** Saturdays Oct 6th, Nov 3rd, Dec 1st. 10am—midday. Meet at corner of Greendown and Troopers Hill Road. Join us for a cup of coffee and a chat afterwards.

**Meetings.** Thursday Oct 4th, 7.15pm, Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road. *Come along and share your views on our Local Nature Reserve.*

**Walking for Health walks:** Oct 12th & 31st, Nov 12th & 23rd, Dec 4th & 19th.

For further details, contact Clare—see Contacts panel (below).

### Other events:

**Sunday 23rd Sept. Avon Valley Walk.** 10am—4pm. *A guided walk through local green spaces with the opportunity for lunch at [Beeses Riverside Bar & Tea Gardens](#) or bring a picnic and relax at Eastwood Farm.* **[Booking Essential.](#)**

**Sunday Oct 14th. Family Fun Dog Show.** Troopers Hill Field. Registration from 1.30pm, judging starts at 2pm. *A fun event for dogs and owners of all shapes and sizes. All classes free to enter. Don't be late!*

**Saturday Oct 20th. Stepping Forward Celebration event. 2-4pm.** *Join us on Troopers Hill field for an exciting and unusual opening ceremony, followed by craft activities and a walking, storytelling event with Martin Maudsley suitable for all ages. Starts 2pm prompt at Malvern Road entrance.*

**Sunday Nov 4th. Fungi Foray.** 10.30am. *Back by popular demand, join expert Justin Smith in a hunt for mushrooms, toadstools and other fungi.*

**[Booking Essential.](#)**

**Thursday Dec 6th. Review of 2012.** 7.15—9.00pm. *Join us for a show including slides and videos of the year's events, followed by a short 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:

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

[www.facebook.com/TroopersHill](http://www.facebook.com/TroopersHill)

Or go to the online forum at:

<http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/news&views>

To book a place on an event,  
Phone Judith: 0117 955 9819 (Tue-Sat, 9am-5pm) Or email:  
[events2012@troopers-hill.org.uk](mailto:events2012@troopers-hill.org.uk)

**[Walking for Health](#)** (St George Strollers)

Contact: Clare Willott  
0117 941 4514

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, Pete Crawford, can be contacted on  
07919 628 304

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