



Friends of
Troopers Hill

newsletter

April 2005

HILL USED AS CLASSROOM

Children from Air Balloon Hill Junior School, which is celebrating its centenary this year, have been given field trips to Troopers Hill during February and March. The teachers of the seven and eight year olds were helped to organise the trips by Helen Adshead of the Avon Wildlife Trust and Sally Oldfield, Local Nature Reserves Officer. Together with parents, children and teachers they spent 3 sessions on the hillside investigating its plants, animals and the industrial history of the site. After the trips class based activities followed in which all the children participated in the production of paintings and posters. They helped to produce newly decorated sides for the Friends' gazebo and a tablecloth that will be used at events in future on the Hill and at events in the city to popularise the Hill as a Local Nature Reserve. There are pictures of all kinds of animals and plants that live on the Hill as well as the trademark chimney. Six children – Chloe, Joe, Jakob, Jenna, Karley and Bradley won prizes of bug pots (containers with magnifying lenses on top for looking at bugs!) for their posters and are now hard at work using these in the local area. You can see their winning pictures on our website (see below) by clicking on School Project.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

A local vicar, Julie Nicholson of St. Aidans, is considering putting on a Shakespeare production on the Hill this summer. She is very keen to hear from anybody who might be interested in playing a part on stage or behind the scenes. If you want to find out more please phone Julie on 0117 9677812 or email her on juliek.nicholson@btinternet.com

GOOD FRIDAY FUN

Those people attending the open-air service on the Hill this Easter got more than they bargained for this year because Friends used the event to unveil the newly finished sides to their Gazebo. The event was recorded for all Bristol to see when an Evening Post photographer snapped Local Nature Reserves Officer Sally Oldfield and some of the children, who had helped to create the work at Air Balloon Hill School, proudly holding the new tablecloth between them. The gazebo contained display boards detailing all the work that has been done over the course of the last eighteen months on the Hill and worshippers were encouraged to have a look at the display before returning home. Susan Acton-Campbell, the Chair of the Friends Group said that the event was memorable because "everybody came together for the Service and

learnt something about the Hill at the same time"

EVENTS TO COME

On the 8th of May there will be a repeat of last year's very popular **Dawn Chorus Walk**. You will need to set your alarm as the walk begins at 5.30 am at the Malvern Road gate and will last until about 7.30 am. It has to be this early because this is when the birds you will be able to hear on the walk sing their hearts out. It is led by John Tully who is an expert on birds.

On the 30th May there will be a walk across the Hill led by Helen, a Friend of Troopers Hill. It is called **Flowering Plants – Uses Past and Present**.

We are expecting this event to be very popular and we may need to limit numbers so please email friends@troopers-hill.org.uk or ring Rob on 0117 9475037 to book a place or to get more details.

On the 18th 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. For more details of this event or the Dawn Chorus Walk please give Sally Oldfield a ring on 0117 9224429

BIKER BOVVER

Anyone walking around Malvern Road open space at the weekend or on a weekday evening over the last few months cannot fail to have noticed the young lads who use the space mounted on a variety of motorised bikes. They make a lot of noise and insist on skidding around the field to the danger of children playing, dogs sniffing and the rest of us just trying to enjoy the quiet space. The problem seems to be the fact that the bikes can easily get round the existing gateway into the field at the Malvern Road entrance. At the moment plans are well in hand to replace the old gate with a similar entrance to the new one at the Summerhill Terrace end of the field. This new one will have special provisions made for wheelchair access, and will be much more difficult for the bikers to get through. Thank goodness!

SURVEY FINDINGS

Friends have delivered over 1700 copies of a questionnaire in recent weeks to find out what people living close to the Malvern Road Open Space would like to see done with the area. Many of you have sent in your ideas and comments. 10% of the questionnaires were completed and returned which is a very good response according to the experts. Most of the people who replied are regular visitors to the area who come to have a stroll, look after children, walk the dog or use the slide. Nearly half the people who replied said that the thing they most disliked about the space was the dog mess. A similar number of

replies said they would like to see the play area improved from its current dismal state and most of these people said they would like to see any new facilities fenced off from dogs and better protected from vandals. Many also said that they thought it would be a good idea to resite the play area to another part of the space. Other people commented on the need for benches, more paths, draining the muddy areas on the field and of course doing something about the groups of youths with their motorbikes, noise and cans of drink. The Friends group will make sure that these findings are given to the appropriate people in the Council.

Some of you said that you would consider helping us to organise events on the Hill and the Space so we will be contacting you to tell you about how to join in soon.

There are lots more things that people said but you will have to come to the next meeting if you want to know more – we don't bite! See below for the details.

We would like to welcome the many people who returned questionnaires and are now on our mailing list. This is currently over 150 extra households. We will, of course, continue to deliver the newsletter by hand where required and please do let Susan know if you require a copy but don't receive one. It would, however, help us if those of you who have an email address that we don't have would send it to us at: membership@troopers-hill.org.uk. This will enable us to send you the newsletter by email in future and ease the burden on our overworked volunteer distributors.

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

chair@troopers-hill.org.uk

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

Bristol Council Local Nature Reserves Officer:

Sally Oldfield

sally_oldfield@bristol-city.gov.uk

Tel. 0117 922 4429

GETTING INVOLVED

You could of course come to one of our meetings, everyone is welcome. The next two are **Wednesday 11th May** and **Thursday 30th June** both **7pm** at the **Wesley Memorial Church Hall on Bryants Hill**.

Or, you could 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 or its surroundings.