

# The Friends of Troopers Hill



September/October 2006



It was good to see so many people turn out for our Family Fun Picnic on 12 August. Even though the weather wasn't helpful to the Balloon Fiesta, it suited us and our 2nd balloon race got off to a great start. See our article overleaf.

We'd like to say goodbye and a very big "Thank You" to Caroline Hollies who has been our Community Parks Manager for the last year. It was only a temporary position but she has brought immense enthusiasm and effort to her role and we will miss her. We were expecting to get Gary back, but it turns out that he is going to be taking over responsibility for South Bristol and John Threadgold (who was covering South Bristol) will be coming to East Bristol instead. We welcome him and look forward to working with him to take care of Troopers Hill.

Some of you may have noticed the disappearance of some bushes around the entrance to Troopers Hill from the Field. After consultation with our local Police Beat Manager, Pete Crawford, it was decided at the last meeting that this would improve security at this point whilst hopefully not destroying the den that children use to play in. It means that people entering the Hill can see anyone in the trees.

We've recently become concerned about the motorcycles seen on the Hill. Motor vehicles of any sort are not allowed on the Hill without permission. Motor vehicles damage the flora and fauna. They damage grasses, heathers, mining bees' nests and a host of other species. Please don't let your children take their motor bikes (including scooters and mini motor bikes) onto the Hill.

Work started on our access path to the chimney—and then stopped! It turned out that the lovely gravel originally put down to surface the path didn't bed down properly and produced a surface that wheels couldn't cope with. The gravel was taken up again and we are waiting for a replacement to be laid. So far, no joy. Watch that space!

## Let's Hear it for our Sponsors!

We had to postpone our quiz night this month as we didn't have quite enough entrants to make it viable. However, we do intend to re-schedule it over the winter months, at a time that might be convenient to more people. So look out for further announcements all you quiz fans.

We would, however, like to say an enormous "Thank You" to our many generous sponsors who came up trumps and ensured we had a huge range of prizes for the raffle we were going to hold. We are holding these over for the next time, but in the meantime we want to say thanks to: Bristol Car Mart, Nags Head Hill; Lifestyles Fitness Centre, Clouds Hill Rd; The Trooper public house, Bryants Hill; R. Gingell, Butchers, Nags Head Hill; Karparts, Kingsway; Bristol Video Solutions, St. George; Smile Local, Kingsway; Booze & Food, Nags Head Hill; The Pied Horse public house, Summerhill Road and several other private donors. You are all heroes to Friends of Troopers Hill and we really appreciate your support.

## Hidden "Treasure" on Troopers Hill!

Hidden somewhere on Troopers Hill is a box called a "Geocache". Combining elements of a treasure hunt, a nature trail and hi-tech orienteering, "Geocaching" is a worldwide activity involving millions of people from Uzbekistan, through Botswana to the USA. If you go to [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) and put in a postcode around the Hill, you will find at least 20 caches within 3 miles of Troopers Hill. So, what is it?

A geocache consists of a small, usually plastic box that will typically contain a selection of small value items—a keyring, a toothbrush, a badge, a yo-yo and a toy tank are typical of the things that we have found. The point is not what the items are worth, but how they got there. If you take something out, you put something in and move the item on to another cache. If you're lucky you might find a special item called a "Travel Bug" that may have made its way there from far away. In one cache close by the Hill is a "TB" that started out in India and is making its way around the world. Your editor hopes to help it on its way by taking it to the USA soon and placing it in a cache there.

To take part, you will need to access the website (you can do this at the library) and register a username—which is free. You will also need a GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) receiver, which will set you back around £70, so unfortunately it's not cheap to get started. GPS identifies a position anywhere on the earth with a specific co-ordinate accurate to around 20 feet. These co-ordinates you get from the website and load into your receiver, which will guide you close to the cache. Then the hard bit begins—finding it! It's usually pretty well concealed to avoid prying eyes.

Hunting for caches is extremely addictive and it takes you to places you might not otherwise think of visiting. They are usually in parks and open spaces. We have already visited some in Warnley House, Cocks Road Ridge, St Werburgh's, Eastville Park and a whole host of locations in the Gower on a recent visit there. If you would like to try it out before buying a GPS unit, ask Susan to put you in touch with us. We may be able to lend you a unit for your first hunt and give you some pointers. Happy Geocaching.

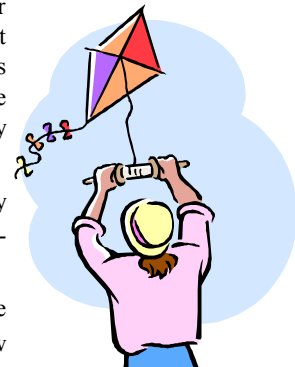
*Kit and Helen*

## Fly a Kite with us!

Saturday 14 October will see another new event for FoTH. Inspired by the number of people we see on the Hill flying them, we're holding our first kite event starting at 3 pm. Bring your kite and fly it if you have one. If not, don't worry. We will have some DIY kite kits available for £2 each or the kids can make paper kites, decorate them and then fly them.

We hope to be having a kite flying display and a demonstration showing the differences between different kites.

So come along and join in. It's going to be great fun and you may find yourself a new hobby.





### Family Fun Picnic

Well, the weather may not have been right for the Bristol Balloon Fiesta, but it was ideal for our Family Fun Picnic on 12 August. A large turnout enjoyed a lovely, if blustery, day. Cassandra, our story teller, kept the children (and some of the adults) occupied and took them around the Hill collecting grass, twigs and other bits to decorate a cardboard badger paw. Picnics were eaten and we released almost 100 sponsored bio-degradable balloons. They made an impressive sight as they soared off heading south. The balloons raised over £150 to help keep FoTH going and fund some more events.

The winning balloon travelled an astonishing 250 miles from Troopers Hill and was found in Pervencheres, south-west of Paris! Congratulations to Lewis and Mitchell, who were really excited to receive their prize, which was once again sponsored by Bristol Video Solutions.

### River Avon Local Nature Reserves Walk

On a damp Sunday morning, twenty walkers braved the weather to explore the local nature reserves along the River Avon.

Setting off from Conham River park, we walked up through Dundridge Park where we were treated to an informative talk from Bernard, a member of the Dundridge park group. Bernard had several interesting maps and stories about the area which we were all keen to hear and see before setting off for Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve.

Once at Troopers Hill we had a short talk from Rob Acton- Campbell, shared some stories about bracken management and admired Troopers Hill's signs. More walkers joined us at the historic chimney and we headed onwards across the Hill towards Strawberry Lane.

### Dates for Your Diary

**Saturday 7 October:** Work Party on the Hill. 10am to midday. *Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown. Everyone is welcome. Come and help look after your Hill.*

**Saturday 14 October:** Kite Event. 3pm. *Come and fly your kite with us, make a kit or paper kite and fly it. Kite flying demonstrations at 4 & 5pm*

**Saturday 4 November:** Work Party on the Hill. 10am to midday. *Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown.*

**Tuesday 7 November:** Meeting. 7.15 to 9.00pm. *Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Bryants Hill*

**Saturday 2 December:** Work Party on the Hill. 10am to midday. *Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown.*

**Wednesday 13 December:** AGM, including our annual slide show of the year's events. 7.15 to 9.00pm. *Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Bryants Hill*

### Barton Hill History Group

Following an inspirational local community exhibition, the Barton Hill History Group was formed in September 1983. Since then, through many displays, meetings, presentations, publications and exhibitions the BHHG has matured into Bristol's most active local History Group. More recently our programme has included Whitehall Redfield, Lawrence Hill, Newtown, The Dings, Moorfields, Crews Hole, Troopers Hill and Speedwell.

Over the last 23 years the gathering of memories and photographs has been coupled with detailed historical research, both industrially and socially and we have a large archive of photos and memories. This has enabled us to produce two books in the Archive Photographs Series, BARTON HILL published in 1997 and more recently BARTON HILL REVISITED completed and printed in 2005. This book is available now so if you would like a copy just contact us. Our other publications include Footprints, War on the Hill, History of Lawrence Hill, Moorfields and the Barton Hill History Trail, not forgetting the BHHG magazine 'the Bartonian' published three times a year.

Barton Hill History group meets on the third Wednesday of each month at the Barton Hill Settlement Ducie Road at 7.30. and the cost is 75p for members and £1.50 for non-members. Usually included in our meetings is a talk, with slides, on a topic that should be of interest to anyone living in the East Bristol area who enjoys local history. We're also interested in promoting Family History. There is a break for tea and biscuits and our raffle. We also meet socially for skittles matches and day trips.

If you would like to become a member of the Barton Hill History Group, there is an annual membership fee of £8. This includes you on our mailing list and entitles you to receive newsletters, quarterly journals and a concessionary entrance fee to our meetings.

We are always looking for more photos and memories so if you have any you would like to share with us or should you require any further information, contact Pauline on 01179670588 or Dave on 01179659750.

Following the River Avon upstream, we passed many fishermen and others out enjoying the river at the weekend. Then we caught the ferry at Beeses which transported us across to Eastwood Farm, a recently proposed Local Nature Reserve. Then we all had a well deserved picnic before Julian Thomas took us on an expert tour around the site. We were lucky enough to spot two herons onsite before heading back to Conham, but only after some enjoyed a well-deserved drink at Beeses!

It was a great day out and the sun came out just in time for our picnic. Bristol Living Rivers in conjunction with Bristol Parks, Friends of Troopers Hill, Dundridge Park Group & Friends of Eastwood Farm intend to repeat this walk next year. So, we look forward to welcoming you then on what is sure to be another lovely day out.

### CONTACT US

To talk to us about issues raised in this newsletter, or about any other concerns, please contact:

**Susan Acton-Campbell** (Chair) on **0117 947 5037**  
**3, Corkers Hill, St. George, Bristol, BS5 8DT.**  
 email: [chair@troopers-hill.org.uk](mailto:chair@troopers-hill.org.uk)

**Sally Oldfield** (Local Nature Reserves Officer) on **0117 922 4429**  
 email: [sally\\_oldfield@bristol-city.gov.uk](mailto:sally_oldfield@bristol-city.gov.uk)

Or

Post a message on the new Forum at:

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