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The Friends of Troopers Hill: 10 Years On!

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Winter 2013/14



It is ten years since The Friends of Troopers Hill was formed, and we have a huge amount to boast about. There is more inside, but above all, we would like to thank you, our many readers, supporters and volunteers who have shown an interest in and enthusiasm for your Local Nature Reserve.

For our part, we will continue to run our regular work parties and fundraise for future projects to protect Troopers Hill.

As many of you will have seen, the unusually dry summer led to a rash of fires on the Hill. Some of them are thought to have been started by disposable BBQs and others by discarded cigarette butts. Whatever the cause, we would like to thank the Avon Fire Service for their speedy response, which damped down what could otherwise have developed into costly, and very dangerous, blazes.



Also, a big thank you to the guys from Community Pay-back team who have done a great job of clearing up the remains of the burnt (and sooty) Broom.

We'd also like to say thank you to Bryan and Jude at "Modelmania" on Clouds Hill Road for very quickly setting up a display of all our leaflets in their shop after the suggestion was made at a recent meeting. Bryan will be well known, for his patience and help, to many model enthusiasts who have visited the shop over the years. For everyone else, just pop in and pick up a leaflet on Troopers Hill history, geology and nature whenever you want.



A great evening was had by all of us at our AGM on the 5th Dec. Rob presented a fascinating slide show of the last ten years, showing just how far we had come. More importantly, perhaps, there was some great cake to be enjoyed!

We have been working hard on the programme of events for next year. Many of the regulars are in there, together with some exciting new ideas. You should receive your copy of the programme with the newsletter, but you will also, of course, be able to pick one up at Modelmania.

It's that time of year again, and as usual we would very much like to wish all our readers and supporters

A Very Merry Christmas

and a

Happy New Year.



Green Volunteers Awards

The [Bristol Green Volunteers Awards](#) took place in Armada House on Thursday 28th November and we are delighted to announce that our very own Rob Acton-Cambell was awarded the Lord Mayor's Green Volunteer Award, which was sponsored by Destination Bristol. As Rob himself was not able to attend, the award was collected by Nancy Carlton from the [Bristol Parks Forum](#) and Kit Elliott on behalf of Friends of Troopers Hill.

Many of you will know Rob from having attended one of our walks, our events, our work parties or perhaps one of the many talks he has given to various groups. What you may not know is that FoTH is just one of the many things Rob does voluntarily. Just look at this list:



- Designs and Maintains the excellent FoTH website and helps maintain our Forum and Facebook page;
- Co-ordinated the Stepping Forward project for FoTH (and make no mistake, this was a major job);
- Treasurer for [Friends of Eastwood Farm](#) and does their website;
- Chair of [St George Neighbourhood Partnership](#), plus helps maintains their website, Facebook and Twitter;
- Champion of the Neighbourhood Partnership Environment sub-group;
- Designs and maintains The [HEART animal rescue](#) website;
- Committee member of the Bristol Parks Forum and compiles fortnightly update emails for the BPF as well as maintaining their website;
- Sits on the "[Wild City](#)" steering group.
- Oh—And he works 4 days a week as well.

Many congratulations Rob, and very well deserved it was too.

Rob and Susan don't have a TV. Just as well eh?

Congratulations

"Congratulations on your 10th anniversary. The Friends group is the lifeline to Troopers Hill, ensuring that both nature and people are able to live on the reserve in relative harmony, while maintaining and safe environment that preserves important elements of Bristol's social history. A local reserve for local people is vital if we are to continue engaging the Bristol community with the natural world on their doorstep. With the support, advice and advocacy to local people and Bristol City Council, the Friends group is able to ensure an important green space remains in the city. It has been a pleasure to be involved with Troopers Hill during the past ten years, and I look forward to supporting, advocating and enthusing about the reserve for many more years to come."

Ed Drewiitt

"I have worked with FoTH on various events over the last year and every time it has been a pleasure. Their commitment to and knowledge of the local areas open spaces is an inspiration. They have really helped my Avon Weeds project progress in Bristol and I look forward to working with them many times more in the future. Congratulations on Ten Years!

*Neil Green
Avon Invasive Weeds Project Officer*

"Congratulations to Friends of Troopers Hill for your 10th Anniversary and for all your hard work looking after, and promoting, the natural history of the hill"

Justin Smith

"I am more than happy to congratulate the Friends on their tenth anniversary. They have been a model to other groups across the city and beyond in the active and positive contribution they have made to both the planning and implementation of reserve management. I have enjoyed my small involvement in their successful programme of public events and educational activities."

Rupert Higgins

"Congratulations on your 10th anniversary and all that you have achieved in that time. There can be very few other groups in the country that have done so much for a local nature reserve. You have set an example of excellence. Well done indeed!
Best wishes for the next ten years."

*Andrew Matthieson
Avon RIGS Group*

"Congratulations on a fantastic 10 years of hard work, amazing commitment, great events and sheer enthusiasm! I can't believe that 10 years ago I delivered a questionnaire around the local streets asking if people would like to attend a meeting to talk about Troopers Hill. My hope was to set up a small Friends Group who might take an interest in Troopers Hill and get involved. Little did I think how rapidly this group would take-off and how much it would grow to achieve. It is all thanks to the people involved, their efforts, ambition and community spirit. Although I now live in London, I continue to take great interest in Troopers Hill and I'm looking forward to hearing about your achievements over the next 10 years!"

*Sally Oldfield,
Former Bristol Wildlife Officer*

".....I am constantly impressed by the varied and constant programme of events put on not to mention funding that the group raise and improvements both facilitated and done themselves."

"It's always been a pleasure to team up with FoTH be it to arrange guided walks or during my time working in Barton Hill to do work on the site with a team of volunteers."

I remember going on a guided walk with Sally Oldfield (probably back in 2007) and first hearing about the mining bee. Although the information boards do a great job at reminding me of this nature fact, and much more, hearing this in person for the first time was a joy. And something I've passed on many times to friends and walking groups alike.

".....So from me personally, and Walking for Health Bristol, congratulations on an educational and inspiring 10 years! I hope FoTH is proud of all they have achieved, given and enabled."

*Nicola Ferris
Health Walks Development*

"Hi Friends of Troopers Hill, I, Steve Shepherd, and also the team of Shepherds Way, would like to congratulate you on your 10th Anniversary, and in those ten years, all the fantastic work you have done for the better of the wildlife, the environment, also with engaging people to help and work alongside of you."

"I am also sure, that if they could send a message, that all of the creatures, animals, birds and insects, and all living things on Troopers Hill, would like to say a

'MASSIVE THANKS' too. Once again, congratulations and thanks, from myself and the team."

*Steve Shepherd
Shepherds Way, BCFM Radio*

"Congratulations to the Friends of Troopers Hill! It's such a lovely spot. A world away from the mad rush of Bristol yet so close to the city centre. All that history and dog walking potential in one place! And as I found out when I visited with BBC Bristol, it's in such safe and loving hands thanks to the hard work and dedication of you Friends."

*Ben Prater
Formerly with Radio Bristol, Now with BBC Radio Wiltshire*

A Friends of Troopers Hill Timeline

2003, Friends group formed, first nature walk first litter pick.



2004, Management and Action Plan signed, 1st events, 1st Lottery Grant (Awards for All)



2007, First Green Flag awarded, Breathing Spaces funds leaflets



2006, Greendown hedge planted, 1st Music on the Hill concert



2005, School Project makes our colourful table cloth, Moth Night



2008, Trooping the Hill event, 1st Dog Show



2009, Tai Chi on the Hill, New Play Area opened



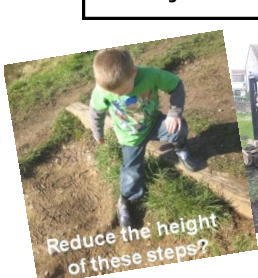
2011, Field Tree Planting, St George Strollers Walking group launch



2010, Stepping Forward Grant application, Troopers Hill Rd works, Suspected mine shaft collapse



2012, Stepping Forward Project works carried out



2013, Tree and Audio Trails created, Both Chimneys repaired



Every day is Christmas
when you have the kind of mind,
That stores up all the goodness
and the sweetness it can find
When you don't need an occasion,
to spread a bit of cheer,
But just keep on a-giving,
of yourself throughout the year

Every day is Christmas,
with a gaily wrapped surprise,
When you to see the friendship,
in someone else's eyes.
When you try a little harder,
and complain a little less,
Holding fast to all the fervor
of the faith that you possess

Every day is Christmas,
when you've found that you can be
More concerned with words like "you"
and less with "I" and "me".
When it's fun to do a favor,
and to lend a helping a hand,
When being understood means less,
than when you understand

Every day is Christmas,
with a beauty deeply cast,
When you find it doesn't matter,
if you're first or if you're last
When you can face your conscience,
and be glad of what you are,
Then every day is Christmas,
with a stable and star.

Anonymous

Dates for your Diary

Regular events:

Work Parties: Saturdays Jan 4th, Feb 1st, Mar 1st, Apr 5th. 10am—midday. Meet at Troopers Hill Road and Greendown. *Help us look after Troopers Hill. Gentle exercise and a bit of a laugh over some coffee.*

Meetings. Thursdays Jan 30th, Mar 27th. 7.15pm, Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road. *Come along and share your views on our Local Nature Reserve.*

St George Strollers: Fri 10th Jan: **Cotham and Kingsdown.** Meet 10.25am, Lidl car park, Lawrence Hill. **Wed 22nd Jan: Sea Mills to Durdham Down.** Meet 10.25am, Lidl car Park, Lawrence Hill. **Bring £2 for train.** **Mon 10th Feb: Statues of Bristol.** Meet The Cascade Steps, the Centre, 10.30am. **Tue 25th Feb: Wain Brook Wander.** Meet St George Library, 10.00am. **Thurs 13th Mar: Ashton Court Deer Walk.** Meet bus stop opp Aldi, Church Rd, 10.00am for coach pickup. **Wed 26th Mar: Literary history tour of Clifton Village.** Meet Old Market, 10.30am. Further details, contact Clare—see Contacts panel.

Walks: (booking essential—see Contacts panel)

February **Star Gazing** with the Bristol Astronomical Society. 7-8.30pm. Numbers will be limited to 25. Email events2014@troopers-hill.org.uk or contact Susan to learn more.

Sunday Apr 6th: Dawn Chorus Walk. 5.45—7.15am. A guided walk to listen to bird song led by expert Ed Drewitt.

Other events:

Saturday March 22nd: St Aidan's Community Fair. 11am -2pm. St Aidan's and St George church and hall, Fir Tree Lane. *Come and visit our stand.*

Friday April 18th: Good Friday Service on Troopers Hill. *Procession starts from Summerhill Methodist Church at 11.30am*

ABC of Troopers Hill

R is for Reptiles - a class of cold-blooded animals with scaly skin, including snakes and lizards. Two species of lizard live on Troopers Hill: the Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and the Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*).

Both creatures will typically bask in the sun's rays to raise their temperature. The Common Lizard has four short legs, but Slow-Worms have no visible legs and they resemble snakes, from which they can be distinguished by having eyelids and ear openings (snakes have none) and their tongues, which have a notched end rather than a snake-like fork. The Common Lizard may be found in a wide range of habitats from heaths and woods to ditches, hedgerows and gardens. The Slow-Worm inhabits moist grassy areas with scrub including wild gardens, open woodland and wasteland. Garden-dwelling Slow-Worms seem to favour the darkness and warmth of the compost heap (including your Editor's !). The Common Lizard and the Slow-Worm hibernate in winter, and both give birth to live young. The Common Lizard's offspring number between 3 and 10 and are usually born in July.

Slow-Worms produce between 3 and 26 very small offspring, usually in August/September. Lizards can often shed their tails to distract predators; the discarded section carries on moving after it has been detached allowing the lizard to escape. The tail regrows, but rarely to its original length. The Slow-Worm in this picture may have shed its tail at some stage.



Bryn Frialen

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

friends@troopers-hill.org.uk

www.facebook.com/TroopersHill

Or go to the online forum at:

www.troopers-hill.org.uk/news&views

To book a place on an event,

Phone Judith: 0117 955 9819 Or email:

events2014@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. He can be contacted via the Police non-urgent phone number 101

www.troopers-hill.org.uk