

FRIENDS *of* PITTVILLE

July 2018

The aim of Friends of Pittville is to promote greater community involvement in the enjoyment, protection, future restoration and renewal of Pittville Park and Estate.

Welcome to the Friends of Pittville newsletter. In this issue Chris Archibald reports back on the Cheltenham BioBlitz and Hilary Simpson draws our attention to some of the recent activities of Pittville History Works. Andy Hopkins finds out about one of the more unusual fitness groups that can be seen regularly in the park, while Judie Hodsdon tells us about how Pittville has been featuring on the airwaves.

BioBlitz in Pittville Park

The University of Gloucestershire, together with Cheltenham Borough Council, organised a BioBlitz in Pittville Park starting on the evening of Friday June 8th and going through to the Saturday evening. The object of the BioBlitz was for expert scientists, naturalists and volunteers – mainly students – to record as much wildlife as possible.



A group of volunteers assemble for the BioBlitz count.

The headquarters for the project was the Boathouse on the west side of the park, where microscopes were set up, with organisers in a nearby marquee arranging the various surveys, welcoming those interested in participating and displaying the results as they came in. Fortunately, the weather was kind. Saturday was a beautiful, sunny day, and the good weather encouraged quite a few people either to join the various surveys or to stop and talk to the scientists or students.

A wide range of surveys took place over the 24-hour period, including counts of moths, amphibians, birds, insects, reptiles, lichen and bats, as well as looking for microplastics in the lake. I joined the reptile survey in the wildlife area west of Tommy Taylors Lane and we found several slow worms. Other results were: over 40 species of moths; 30 species of birds; three, possibly four, species of bats. A small amount of microplastics was found in the lake – it seems to be everywhere these days. It was a very interesting exercise and revealed useful information about our park.

Chris Archibald

Pittville on the airwaves

John Simpson, as the lead for Pittville History Works, and I, as FOP Chairman, were recently interviewed, separately, for the radio programme *Me and My Music*. As well as playing our choices of eight records, we each talked extensively about Pittville and the activities of the Friends. Both interviews will be broadcast several times – but as it is a Cotswold Hospital Radio programme, you would have to be in one of Gloucestershire's hospitals to hear them!



In early May Cheltenham was featured in Channel 4's series *Britain's Most Historic Towns*, presented by Dr Alice Roberts. There was plenty about Pittville and some lovely shots of the area, as well as cameo appearances from our members Steve Blake, Fiona Clarke and James Hodsdon.

Judie Hodsdon

Pittville History Works

A PITTVILLE FAMILY IN A NEW EXHIBITION AT THE WILSON

The centrepiece of a new exhibition in the Open Archive at The Wilson is a large war painting of soldiers from the 1st Battalion of the 5th Gloucestershire regiment returning from a stint in the trenches on the Western Front. The painting was commissioned in 1920 by Cheltenham's Art Gallery and Museum Committee, chaired by Clara Winterbotham, Cheltenham's first woman councillor and later its first woman mayor. Her two brothers feature in the painting - Cyril, who was killed in action on the Somme in 1916, and Percy, who survived. At the outbreak of the First World War the Winterbotham family were living in Cranley Lodge, Wellington Square, and they have a long association with Pittville. Find out more at the exhibition, which continues until next March.



A relieved platoon of the 1/5th Gloucestershire Regiment. Fred Roe (1864-1947) Courtesy of The Wilson

PITTVILLE AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, every household in the country was visited and the names, addresses and other key details of the entire civilian population were collected. Identity cards were issued on the spot as part of this exercise. The History Works Group is now starting to put information from this register onto the website – the details for Albert Road have already been published, and Prestbury Road will be available soon. New job titles such as shorthand typists start to make an appearance, and some of the large houses have been converted into flats, but there is still a substantial number of retired military officers and ladies of independent means.

STEVE BLAKE'S BOOK ABOUT PITTVILLE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Steve Blake's book *Pittville 1824-1860: a scene of gorgeous magnificence* is the standard introduction to the history and buildings of Pittville. It has been out of print for some years, but the Pittville History Works Group has now made it available online. Just go to the website by searching for 'Pittville History' and you will find it under 'Pittville places'.

HOUSE HISTORIES

The Pittville History Works Group is slowly adding to the house histories on its website and has recently added one for Homespring House in Pittville Circus Road. Would you like to add yours? We can help to get you started with census information, but ideally, you will also need access to your deeds and be prepared do some additional research both online and in the Local and Family History Centre. If you are interested please get in touch via the History Works Group website.

Hilary Simpson

Pittville Park to have Changing Places facility



Work will begin shortly at Pittville Park to install a new toilet facility which will help meet some of the specialised needs of people with

complex disabilities. The decision to develop two Changing Places facilities in the town was made by Cheltenham Borough Council to enable disabled visitors and their carers to have appropriate facilities to support extended access to activities and amenities within Cheltenham. A grant of £88,000 was secured through the Gloucestershire County Council's disabled children and young people's short breaks capital grant to install the first of the two facilities at Pittville Park, supporting disabled visitors of the adjacent, fully accessible, play area. The development of the facility has the support of a number of stakeholder groups, including Bettridge School, Carers Gloucestershire, Leonard Cheshire and St George's and St Vincent's Association. The council have also been engaging with these and other organisations to identify a second location within the town centre. Work is expected to be complete by August 2018.

Who uses Pittville Park?

The park is full of people doing all kinds of leisure activities, particularly to do with physical exercise. There are cyclists, runners, walkers, joggers ... alone, in twos and threes. Then there are the more organised groups – the Saturday morning 5k runners come to mind, and the ever-present Military Fitness advocates. But the group that is perhaps most unusual is made up of women, babies and buggies – it is the **Buggyfit** group.



Physiotherapist Joan Palmer has been running this group, aimed at new mothers, for the last six years. ‘The park’s an ideal environment – the fresh air, the beautiful surroundings. So we meet here, at the Pump Room, whatever the weather, three mornings a week, and we move around the park stopping to do a variety of exercises in different locations. Our first stop will be down by the lake.’

I am taken aback by the number of people who take part – there are fourteen this morning. ‘We had twenty-five last week,’ says Joan, who runs a wide range of courses aimed at women with children. This group seems enthusiastic and friendly. There are babies from six weeks here, as well as toddlers.



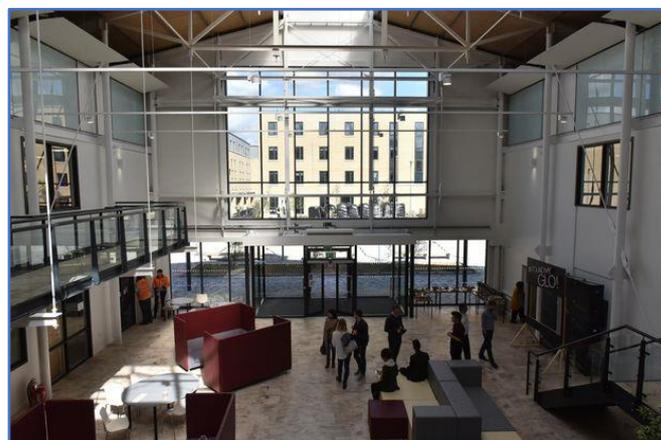
‘But there are also fitness classes that don’t involve children. I’m starting a new class on September 11th at 9.15 called Women’s Outdoor Fitness for women of any age who just want to get fit.’

If you’d like to know more about Joan’s classes, visit <http://www.mumsfit.co.uk> or see Joan’s Facebook page at *Mumsfit & Buggyfit Gloucestershire*.

Andy Hopkins

Pittville Student Village

At the official opening of the Student Village on April 5th I met Tom Skinner, the University stakeholder and alumni manager, who is based there. Later, with Chris Archibald, we met up to



discuss information sharing and volunteering possibilities. We will make sure the Village gets copies of our newsletters and Tom will get information about the working parties. There may be some specific projects – learning, environmental, historical – that may be of interest to students, but the more likely involvement will be by members of staff based at the Village who want to take part in the Green Space Volunteers’ work on a regular or occasional basis. We also discussed the possibility of tours of the Village for Friends in the summer vacation and the use of meeting rooms.

Judie Hodsdon

Holst Birthplace Museum

We were delighted to learn that the Holst Birthplace Museum has been awarded the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS). Congratulations to all those involved in maintaining and developing this excellent specialist museum.

A safe crossing for Tommy Taylors Lane?

With the development of the Midwinter housing estate and the popularity of Pittville Park and the Leisure Centre, there is a growing need for a safe crossing across Tommy Taylors Lane. Please sign the online petition (see below) if you support a pedestrian crossing between the Prince of Wales stadium car parks by the Prince Regent Avenue junction, and the pedestrian entrance to Pittville Park. The petition is open until August 31st.

(Go to the web address below and follow the links: www.glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ePetitions)

FRIENDS OF PITTVILLE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, October 30th 2018
Dunalley School

Local historian Stuart Manton will tell the fascinating story of *Pittville's Zoo Wars* – how Pittville nearly came to have a zoo.

Looking for an allotment?

In the newsletter of October 2017, we included a note about small privately-run allotment gardens next to Windsor Street Care Home, available for local people. They are about 3 m x 3 m. Plots do become available from time to time, so if you would like to be put onto a waiting list, please ring Bill Harvey (01242 541149). There is an initial registration fee of £20, and then £10 payable each September.

Cheltenham Horticultural Society Summer Show

The Summer Show will be held in the Pittville Pump Room on Sunday August 19th. For full details, please visit the Society website at www.cheltenhamhorticultural.co.uk

Plant sale

FOP held its annual plant sale on May 5th. The weather was perfect and £480 was raised towards improvements to the park. Many thanks to everyone who provided plants and came to help.

Help needed!! Join an award-winning team ...

Friends of Pittville has a proud record of volunteering, fund-raising, and initiating and managing projects. We urgently need some new people to join us to keep the momentum going. Some of our original trustees are coming to the end of their terms of office, so replacements will be needed in the coming year. Can you help?

We particularly need a secretary and someone to look after communications. Every trustee gets involved in some activity or other, but this does not necessarily mean an onerous time commitment – we have only six full committee meetings a year. Would you like to attend a meeting to find out more? Please do give it some thought and contact Judie (chairman@friendsofpittville.org.uk) or Fiona (secretary@friendsofpittville.org.uk) now!

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

You may be rather tired of receiving messages about GDPR, but at least you will not be getting an individual message from Friends of Pittville. This is because, as a membership organisation, FOP has a legitimate interest in using information supplied by our members, and in communicating relevant information to them. Under E-privacy regulations we can continue to use email for some communications if you have supplied your email address. Our up-to-date data-processing policy can be found at www.friendsofpittville.org.uk. If you need a summary on paper, please let us know.

Editor

Sandy Marshall

Design and layout

Andy Hopkins

Photos

Courtesy of The Wilson,
Chris Archibald, Fiona
Clarke, Andy Hopkins

Contact Friends of Pittville at

Telephone: 01242 227720

Email: secretary@friendsofpittville.org.uk

Registered charity number 1146790



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

The MBE for volunteer groups

