



FRIENDS *of* PITTVILLE

Dec 2019

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 December edition of the newsletter. If you missed our recent AGM, all the documentation, including the accounts and the Chairman's report, can be found on the FoP website. In this issue, we celebrate the Cheltenham parkrun in Pittville Park. There's news of a new association that focuses specifically on the revival of the Pump Room, a piece about collaborations between Pittville History Works and the Holst Birthplace Museum, updates on volunteer activities in the park, and dates for next year's quiz night and plant sale. And finally, some advice about shrubs. Happy Christmas, everyone!

Cheltenham parkrun

If you rarely visit Pittville Park before mid-morning on the weekends, it's possible that you have failed to notice close to four hundred people of all ages and abilities running along a course around the lake on the west side of the park. This is the Cheltenham parkrun, a 5km event that takes place every Saturday morning at 9am, and starts near the Leisure Centre.

Parkrun was started by a small group of runners in Teddington in 2004. The idea behind parkrun is that it should be inclusive, achievable and managed by volunteers. It should be weekly, 5km long, free for everyone, forever! From small beginnings, parkrun has expanded hugely, internationally as well as nationally. Today, there are weekly events in twenty-two countries. In Britain, there are currently over 600 locations, and one of the finest is our park.

Everyone is encouraged to take part, including children (accompanied if under eleven), runners with a child in a pushchair, and those with dogs kept on a short lead (but not pushchairs *and* dogs!). The average time for a 5km run in Pittville Park is just under half an hour. It's not a race, it's a cooperative, fun exercise activity. To get involved, you need to register online, where you're issued with a barcode. Every time you run, your barcode is scanned and you can look at the statistics for your individual run online.

It all sounds great. Find out more about it at www.parkrun.org.uk/cheltenham. Or just go up to the park at 9am on Saturday and take a look. It will leave you with a good feeling about our community and wondering why you haven't joined in yet.

Andy Hopkins



Even on a cold, wet day in November ...

And a note from Chris Archibald ...

Parkrun in Pittville Park recently featured in the Saturday section of the *Daily Telegraph* as one of the ten most scenic out of the 635 parkruns in the country. Parkrun has taken place in Pittville Park since 2013 and is a favourite way for runners, joggers and walkers to enjoy the park on a Saturday morning. It's not surprising that some doctors are prescribing runs like this to help with patients' health. A new parkrun has recently been set up at King George V playing fields, near Hesters Way, which may be more convenient for those who live to the west of Cheltenham.

Cheltenham Lottery and Friends of Pittville



Please consider helping Friends of Pittville by buying tickets for the Cheltenham Lottery. The lottery has been set up to help local good causes and 50p from every £1 ticket you buy will benefit FoP if you nominate us. All money raised will help us fund the development projects in the park, around the upper lake and the Pump Room. We have to sell **fifty** tickets to take part in the lottery and so far, twenty-four have been bought. Please buy a ticket or two to help us reach our target, which will raise over £1000 for FoP over the course of a year. It will also give you the chance to win prizes of up to £250 per weekly draw, with a jackpot prize of £25,000. To find out more, or buy tickets, go to the Friends of Pittville page on the lottery website: www.cheltenhamlottery.co.uk.

Judie Hodsdon

Events in 2020

QUIZ NIGHT, MONDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2020

Amanda Slayton-Joslin, the FoP member who organised the annual quiz has, unfortunately, moved away. We are grateful for her hard work. However, in 2020 we will once again hold our fundraising quiz night for members and friends at the Feathered Fish in Winchcombe Street. Please book the date. Entry fee will again be only £5 for each entrant. This is always an enjoyable social event and helps to raise funds to improve the park. We will have a raffle, so please let Philippa Howell know if you can donate prizes on 07564 521516. More information will follow in the new year.

PLANT SALE, SATURDAY 9 MAY 2020

Our popular annual plant sale will again be held in front of the Scout Hut in Central Cross Drive. As usual, plants grown by Friends of Pittville members and friends will be on sale, as well as plants from local nurseries. See the next issue for details.

New team to manage the wildfowl feed dispenser

We now have a small team of people who look after the duck feeder. St Vincent's and St George's service users look after it on weekdays and we share the funds with them. Last year we raised £396 for FoP. Young volunteers also help to feed the ducks – eight-year-old Jasmine, and her

brother Leo, who is six, are probably our youngest volunteers. Each weekend and Bank Holiday they cycle with their father Austin to check and top up the wildfowl feed dispenser in the park.

Philippa Howell



Progress on Bed 38

There is a flower/shrub/tree bed near the junction of Evesham Road and Wellington Road, opposite the hotel at No. 38 The Park. If you are walking north from the town centre, it is the first part of the park you see and it is not very attractive. The old yew tree is suffering from dieback, the commemorative tree is leaning at about thirty degrees and the shrubs are way past their best.

Friends of Pittville volunteers are going to improve the appearance of the bed and replant much of it to give it a more attractive appearance by the spring. We are in the design stage at present and considering ideas that members have put forward.

Restoration of the rockery adjacent to the upper lake

The heritage landscape architect who is advising on the restoration of the rockery visited the site on 15 October and together with the council and volunteers agreed the way forward. This has now been set out in a strategy document that also includes phasing.

Since the meeting, the council have removed another tree that was in a bit of a precarious position, and taken out some stumps and roots that were too difficult for the volunteers. Decisions have been made about the types of plants to put in and about how to protect the rockery as it develops. Planting will start in the spring.

Chris Archibald

Pittville Pump Room revival

As intimated in the September newsletter, PRAG has now formed an independent association, with the blessing of FoP trustees. Its name is Pittville Pump Room Revival (Pump Room Revival for short!).

The aims we have adopted in our constitution are to encourage and support:

1. the preservation, development, interpretation and promotion of Pittville Pump Room's unique heritage
2. the retention and development of Pittville Pump Room as a public space available to all
3. the improvement of the visitor experience at Pittville Pump Room.

We held our first official committee meeting on 13 November and elected officers in an acting capacity until our first AGM early next year. The Chair is David Collins, the Secretary Hilary Simpson, and the Treasurer Fiona Clarke.

A fourth member of the original PRAG, FoP trustee Chris Archibald, will continue as a member of the new association and he will keep Friends of Pittville informed.

The Pump Room Revival committee will meet The Cheltenham Trust (TCT) on 27 November to discuss progress on our aims and how we can move forward together.

PRAG conducted a second mystery shopping evaluation of the visitor experience at the Pump Room over the summer. (Many thanks to all those who helped!). The report has been sent to TCT and is available on the FoP website (on the Documents page). It is also available on our own Facebook page and on www.pumproomrevival.com.

It is easy to become a supporter and help us achieve our aims. There are no complicated



membership procedures - a simple email is fine; you can just write to us at pumproomrevival@outlook.com. At present we are not charging a membership fee, although in due course we may ask for donations or sponsorship to fund specific projects or events.

In the meantime, we can report one significant step forward. Several FoP members who are also volunteers for TCT at the Pump Room have drafted a two-sided laminated tour/information sheet which the visitor can take around the building. This will greatly enhance the visitor experience and it is hoped to have this available by the time you read this.

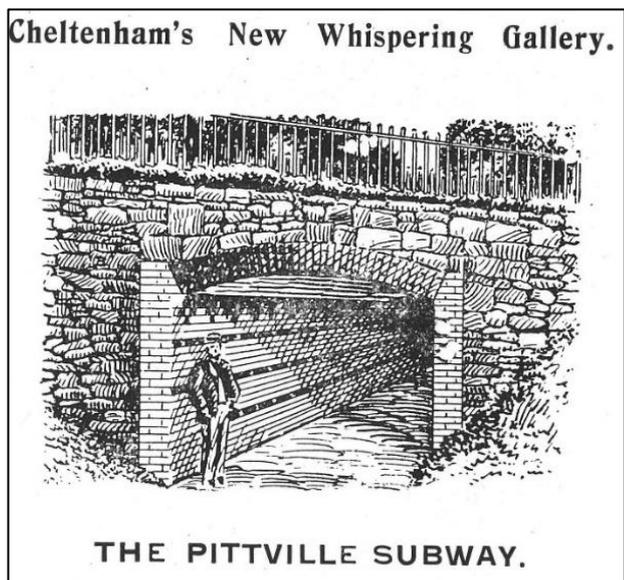
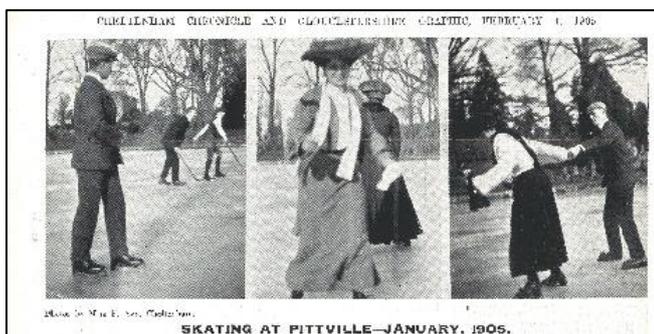
Fiona Clarke on behalf of Pittville Pump Room Revival

Pittville History Works

Pittville History Works spent a morning in the cosy Victorian kitchen at the Holst Birthplace Museum recently, where we were plied with coffee and cake while we talked with curator Laura Kinnear about the plans for the museum's future development. Laura is keen to incorporate Pittville's history into the house's story, and we identified a number of opportunities for the history group to work alongside the museum in exploring Pittville's unique heritage.

Among the recent additions to the history group's website is the earliest known image of the interior of the Pump Room, dating from 1832 (see www.pittvillehistory.org.uk/Pittville%20Park/KittonPumpRoom.htm). The print shows the main hall, with a father encouraging his daughter to look through the windows to the gardens leading down to the lake, while two other visitors rest at the back of the room; the pump can be seen in its original location on the west side. The print itself is on display in the Open Archive at The Wilson until March 2020.

One of our volunteers has been busy identifying the many hundreds of photographs with a Pittville connection that appeared in the Cheltenham Chronicle & Gloucestershire Graphic between 1901 and 1942. Popular subjects included weddings, obituaries and events of all kinds in the park. Here are a few examples.



FASHIONABLE WEDDING IN CHELTENHAM.
 The marriage of Rev. Hadley Douglas Hooper, of Bahuhia, British East Africa, and Miss Margaret Cicely Winterbotham, youngest daughter of the late Alderman James L. Winterbotham, J.P., and Mrs. Winterbotham, of Cranley Lodge, Wellington-square, took place at St. Paul's Church, Cheltenham, on Tuesday, September 21st.
 [Photo by Debenhams, Longman, and Co., Cheltenham.]

We are currently in the process of indexing these photos and organising them into a searchable gallery.
 Hilary Simpson



Berberis Darwinii

Some easy shrubs

I suspect many of you are happy to have plants in the garden that stifle weeds and are easily maintained. I know I am! Below are some suggestions for shrubs that are readily available and give good ground cover and colour all year. Best planted in spring or autumn, shrubs can be put in at this time of year as long as you avoid frost.

First, a few evergreen shrubs. *Berberis Darwinii* have orange flowers followed by blue-black berries; they are medium size, enjoy full sun or partial shade and will tolerate severe pruning in early spring. *Choisya* are good, particularly *Sundance*, with golden yellow foliage and scented white flowers; they like sun, and an occasional prune after flowering. Two smaller *Choisya* with green foliage and white flowers are *Aztec Pearl* and *White Dazzler*. They like sun or light shade and are easy to maintain.

Euonymus Emerald and Gold and *Euonymus Silver Queen* are invaluable. They are happy in full sun or shade, are easily controlled and can be pruned at any time of year.

Although deciduous, fuchsias like *Magellanica* var. *gracilis* and *Riccartonii* earn their place. With milder winters, they are not cut back and can be pruned in early spring to keep their shape. Other easy shrubs are forms of *Lonicera Nitida*, like *Baggesens Gold* and *Twiggy*. They are not fussy about position, and can be clipped into shape.

David Richards

Editor

Andy Hopkins

Photos

Provided by the authors of articles – many thanks

Contact FoP at

Telephone: 01242 227720

Email: secretary@friendsofpittville.org.uk

Registered charity number 1146790



