



April 2017

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 April newsletter from Friends of Pittville. This issue is delivered to all homes in Pittville. Please read about the many activities, achievements and events taking place in Pittville, and if you are not already a member, please see the note on page 4 about joining us.

Recognition for Pittville History Works

We are thrilled to announce that our Pittville History Works (PHW) team has been awarded a Citation by the Cheltenham Arts Council. Their annual awards recognise local groups for their major contributions to the cultural life of the town – in PHW's case, for 'unlocking Pittville's past'.

Over the last two years, the team has pulled together information from censuses, directories, house deeds, photographs, personal reminiscences and other sources, putting it all online so that it is accessible by people all over the world who have an interest in Pittville and the people who lived here from the 1830s until 1901. <http://pittvillehistory.org.uk/index.php>

The awards ceremony took place on 23 March at the Playhouse Theatre and we were there to see John Simpson, FOP member and PHW team leader, accept the certificate on the team's behalf.



Some of the award-winning PHW team: (l-r) Sandy Marshall, Gloria Jones, John Simpson and Judy Langhorn.

Plant Sale

To raise funds to help
Friends of Pittville improve the
park

Saturday 6 May 2017
10am to 1pm

Central Cross Drive, Pittville,
GL 52 2DX
(in front of the scout hut)

Plants supplied by

Cheltenham Horticultural Society
Hoo House Nursery
Dundry Nurseries
Friends of Pittville members

We will also be holding a raffle.
A chance to buy some fabulous plants
at a reasonable cost and perhaps win a
great prize.

Registered charity number 1146790

As you see from the invitation above, Friends of Pittville is holding its second plant sale in early May. If anyone can donate plants, or a raffle prize, please contact Christopher Archibald at volunteer@friendsofpittville.org.uk

If you prefer to telephone, use the number on the back of this newsletter. We look forward to seeing you on 6 May!

Pittville Gates Civic Award

After much debate about the best location for the Civic Award plaque we were presented for the Gates restoration, we decided to attach it to the adjacent wall (with the owner's permission).

It is reasonably visible from both directions but doesn't compromise the listed structure of the gateway itself. Henry Williams, who has returned to the Executive Committee after a couple of years' absence, applied his builder skills to the installation.



Henry Williams fixing the Civic Award at Pittville Gates.

Parks Project - update

The proposal to improve various areas around the Pump Room and the Upper Lake is moving forward gradually. The joint CBC/FOP group has asked a landscape architect to provide an outline of the scope and cost of a study to come up with designs for improvements to the area to the front and sides of the Pump Room, the heritage rockeries and other parts of the banks of the upper lake, plus the area to the south of the playground. When we have this initial outline and cost we will know if we can afford to proceed to the fuller study. Meanwhile we are raising funds in anticipation, including through operating the Albemarle Gate car park during Race Week. The four days of car parking raised the wonderful total of £3549.

In preparation for the study we have been gathering pictures, maps and other information on the heritage of the relevant parts of the park. We are also planning a 'dig' on 20 April to discover if the steps which were once in front of the Pump Room, between the two plinths on the edge of the grass, are still there.

Judie Hodsdon



FOP volunteers manning the car park at Albemarle Gate during race week: (from l-r) James Hodsdon, Martin Jones, Judie Hodsdon, Peter Jones.



Henry Williams in the grip of two optimistic racegoers while charging their car's flat battery!

Quiz Night challenges

Fifty members, with friends and family, enjoyed a rather demanding quiz on 6 February at The Feathered Fish in Winchcombe Street. There was just one batch of questions on Pittville (so anyone who thought it was all about Pittville, don't be put off next time, it isn't!). Thanks to Paul, the quizmaster, who runs a quiz there every Tuesday night (at which all are welcome). Thank you again to FOP member Amanda Slayton-Joslin for organising the event, running the raffle and providing both raffle and quiz prizes. As well as friendly rivalry, with much whispering, and some shouting, at a correct answer, we raised over £270 towards our next big project (see previous item).

Fiona Clarke

New trustee

We welcome our new trustee Philippa Howell to the committee. Philippa is a returnee to Pittville having lived here as a small child – she remembers learning to ride a bicycle in Pittville Park.

Neighbourhood Watch

Some residents of Prestbury Road have recently set up a Neighbourhood Watch group. Anyone interested in setting up their own scheme should contact Bob Lloyd, the Neighbourhood Watch Officer for Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Gloucester, at Police Headquarters, No 1 Waterwells, Waterwells Drive, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 2AN. Tel [01452 752086](tel:01452752086).

Drop Ins still going strong

Our monthly 'Drop Ins' provide an opportunity for members and others to meet on an informal basis to find out what's happening in Friends of Pittville and to give ideas and feedback to our trustees – one of whom, at least, is there each time. Dates for the next three months are 26 April, 31 May, and 28 June – the last Wednesday! Venue: The Sudeley Arms, 25 Prestbury Road, GL52 2PN, between 11.00 and 12.30.



The Sudeley Arms before the entrance was moved to Prestbury Road.

Friends of Pittville Garden Party

Following the success of last year's tea and cakes event, Friends of Pittville will be holding another Garden Party on Sunday 30 July, for members. Keep the date free, become a member if you are not already, and join us for some delicious home-made cakes in a lovely setting. Details of the venue will be given in the July newsletter.

Green Flag/ Green Heritage Site Accreditation

Cheltenham Borough Council are required to apply for the awards each year, although this year

there will not be a full inspection, only a visit by, as it were, a 'mystery shopper'. The forms were submitted at the end of January and we are trying to maintain the standards we achieved last year. In any event we will not lose the awards this year, although we may get some feedback.

Green Space Volunteers

About 25 volunteers help each session in the work of shrub-pruning, path-edging, planting wild flowers, raising tree canopies, and litter picking on the land and from a boat in the lakes.

We have achieved a good deal in the park this year and are grateful to the work done by the volunteers – it does make a difference.

New volunteers are always welcome to join a friendly group working under the direction of Janice, our park ranger. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month, and work between 9 - 11 am.

If you want to find out more or register with the group please e-mail volunteer@friendsofpittville.org.uk or telephone 01242 570 170.

The duck food dispenser: two years on, a great success

The duck food dispenser on the edge of the Upper Lake in Pittville Park (at the new play area end of the lake) is celebrating its second birthday! Friends of Pittville and St Vincent's and St George's Association joined forces in March 2015 to provide healthy eating for the popular ducks, moorhen and coots which live on the lake. We recently moved from grain to 'Fenland Waterfowl Pellets' which are formulated to provide 'a complete balanced maintenance diet for all types of adult and laying ducks, geese and waterfowl'. Not only are the birds happier and healthier, but the proceeds, after costs, are shared between us for 'good causes'.



Since the scheme began, £1350 has been raised which is divided on a 2/5 basis. St Vincent's and St George's has put their share of about £950 towards a hoist for severely disabled adults in a special activity room in the Phoenix Centre in Winchcombe Street. This was installed in March and cost £3,360. The contribution from the public through the

dispenser is greatly appreciated.

Friends of Pittville is adding its share to a fund which will go into significant improvements to the

landscape in Pittville Park, working in conjunction with Cheltenham Borough Council.

Over the two years an estimated 6750 people have paid 20 pence for their handful of duck food. Of course, many of these will be repeat visitors and we are very grateful for their support in particular.

The Boathouse will sell small bags of food during its opening hours over the summer period; this scheme will be managed by 'In the Park'. They will promote our dispenser as well as their own service; again we are most grateful for this help.

Fiona Clarke

A distinguished naturalist

Users of the Pittville History Works web site may well have read John Simpson's article on the naturalist and bird recorder Edmund Selous. Pittville can (just about) claim another notable naturalist in Henry Herbert Knight, who lived in All Saints Villas Road for much of his life.

Although a mathematician by profession (he taught for several years at Llandovery School), botany became a deep-rooted interest which grew into a full-time occupation when he retired and moved from Wales to live with his mother in Cheltenham. H.H. Knight recorded and collected many flowering plants, but it is as one of the country's leading collectors and recorders of bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) that he is now remembered.

For many years he was an active member of the Moss Exchange Club, the forerunner of the British Bryological Society, and served as its President from 1933-4.

His papers *The Mosses of Gloucestershire* (1914) and *The Hepatics (liverworts) of Gloucestershire* (1920) were published by The Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club and remain important sources of information to this day.



One of H.H. Knight's meticulous records, now kept in The Wilson archives. The right-hand page shows the envelopes that store the samples. This is a very valuable collection for both local and national botanists.

Many of his elegantly preserved and annotated collections of bryophytes were presented to the then Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum. Some of them are still available for viewing.

Desmond Marshall

Friends of Pittville: become a member

If you support our aims, please become a member by downloading and returning a Membership Form. Go to

<http://www.friendsofpittville.org.uk/support-us/become-a-member/> The form can also be used to renew your membership.

Membership is just £7.50 a year for single members or £10.00 for a couple from the joining date to 30 September. Subscription renewal date is 1 October yearly.

There are four methods of payment: by cash, by cheque, by standing order or by BACS. Full details can be found on our membership application form.

Included on the membership form is a Charity Gift Aid Declaration Form. By completing this form you boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1.00 you donate.

If you wish to pay by cash or cheque just post a hard copy of your completed form together with your payment to the address printed at the bottom of the form. If you are setting up a standing order simply email the completed form to: membership@friendsofpittville.org.uk

If you do not have internet access, please call our membership secretary (01242 238 552) who will send you a hard copy of the application form.



A local resident enjoying the crocuses on Pittville Circus last month.

Newsletter editor: Sandy Marshall

Photos courtesy of Fiona Clarke, Desmond Marshall, Sandy Marshall, Terry Langhorn

Enquiries: 01242 227 720 or secretary@friendsofpittville.org.uk

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