



**October 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 October newsletter from Friends of Pittville. This issue is delivered by our volunteers to every residence in Pittville and contains news of summer activities, along with upcoming events. Do please come along to our AGM on 16 October, and if you are not yet a member, find out about this active and lively local group in your area.

## **Friends of Pittville AGM**

**The Friends of Pittville AGM will take place on Monday 16 October, at 6.30 pm, in the hall of Dunalley School.**

Tea and coffee will be served from 6 pm.

The meeting will be followed by a short talk by Friend of Pittville member and Pittville History Works leader, John Simpson, entitled '10,000 histories: the people of 19<sup>th</sup> century Pittville'.

on our side – the forecast rain held off until it was over. The parks department kindly lent us their marquee and, decorated with FOP displays and bunting, it looked the part.

The FOP Chairman welcomed the nearly 70 FOP members and guests and was followed by the Cheltenham Deputy Mayor, Councillor Bernard Fisher, who expressed gratitude for the work of the FOP volunteers in the Park, for the Gates restoration project and for fundraising for the play area.



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



*Chairman Judie Hodsdon received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service on behalf of Friends of Pittville.*

The ceremony at which Friends of Pittville received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service took place on the late afternoon of Saturday 29 July. We decided to hold the event in the park as it's the centre of our activities. The weather was



*Two of the volunteers who were presented with QAVS badges: (top) Eileen Lockwood and (bottom) Terry Langhorn.*

The Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, Dame Janet Trotter, described the QAVS scheme and read extracts from the citation giving reasons why

the Friends deserved the Award, which made us all feel very proud. She then presented the award and certificate to the Chairman and Secretary. This was followed by the presentation of badges to a representative group of our regular volunteers – green space workers, newsletter deliverers and historical researchers. Following a toast to the continuing success of the work of the Friends the event concluded with canapés and conversation.

## Pittville History Works Group

The Pittville History Works Group celebrated the completion of Phase 1 of our project with a trip to Prestbury churchyard on 21 August. Because there was no church in Pittville, and the cemetery in Bouncers Lane only opened in 1864, a significant number of Pittville residents were buried in Prestbury and other churchyards, and during our visit we managed to identify and photograph the graves of 40 people with Pittville connections who were buried in Prestbury during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These records will shortly be available on our website. After a morning pottering among the headstones, we had a celebratory lunch at the Royal Oak in Prestbury.

Phase 1 of the project involved collecting information about the residents of the original Pittville estate from the 1840s to the 1900s, and making it available online. Although the group has only been going for three and a half years we now have the details of over 10,000 individuals on our website. In some cases we know very little about them; in other cases we know a lot. You can find out more about these ‘10,000 histories’ at the Friends of Pittville AGM, where project leader John Simpson will be speaking about some of the people of 19<sup>th</sup> century Pittville that the project has uncovered.



Two graves of one-time residents of Pittville: (left) the grave of Mary Ann and William Walker of 2 Prestbury Road (formerly Pittville Cottage), who died in 1857 and 1860.



The Celtic cross (right) is the grave of Elizabeth Thelwall, a servant at 19 Pittville Lawn (formerly 1 Berkeley Villas), who died in 1886.

The group is now moving on to the second phase of the project, extending the timeline into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and incorporating areas such as Pittville Circus and Pittville Circus Road which were not part of the original estate. In addition we will be researching themes such as households with slavery connections, households with military connections, households with links to the Indian sub-continent and all-female households, looking at schools, shops and other commercial establishments, and telling stories of pageants and ghosts. If you are interested in joining the group, please get in touch with us at [info@pittvillehistory.org.uk](mailto:info@pittvillehistory.org.uk).

*Hilary Simpson*

## Friends of Pittville Garden Party

The second garden party for Friends of Pittville members was held at the end of July. 55 members enjoyed delicious homemade cakes in James and Judie Hodsdon’s lovely garden. Gazebos were put up in case of bad weather, but we were grateful that the rain held off. Guests were also invited to visit the neighbouring garden. £370 was raised for FOP funds.



The QAVS award, presented the previous day, was on display, along with the certificate signed by HM the Queen.

## Drop Ins dates

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 25 October, 29 November and 27 December – the last Wednesday! Venue: The Sudeley Arms, 25 Prestbury Road, GL52 2PN, between 11.00 and 12.30.

## Heritage Open Days 2017

Pittville was well represented over Cheltenham's Heritage Open Days: there were guided walks around Wellington and Clarence squares to look at the architecture and find out about the lives of some earlier residents, and the owner of 48 Clarence Square kindly opened his 19<sup>th</sup>-century kitchen to visitors. There was considerable interest in the former wine cellar under Costantinou's Hairdressing and the mysterious space at Pittville Gates. About 70 people took the opportunity to visit the Pump Room and taste the water.



*The replaced heritage board in the west of the park.*

## National Citizen Service

The NCS is a nationally recognised award for students who have just sat their GCSEs. It was an initiative by David Cameron as part of the 'Big Society' - successful students can add the award to their CVs. Over 4 weeks, students visit a number of charities in Gloucestershire and then choose a charity to support, financially or practically.

FOP were asked by Gloucestershire College to tell students what FOP does and how we benefit the community. It was a great opportunity for us to explain this, to show them our great park and explain the benefits we provide for the community.

Rather to our surprise, one of the groups decided on a practical project - painting the duck feed dispenser by the Upper Lake and producing a poster to encourage visitors to feed the correct food to the wildfowl. The students responded to the discussion about the black dispenser not being very visible, or being mistaken for a utilities box. They also appreciated the problems of introducing modern equipment and furniture into a historic landscape. Cheltenham Borough Council approved the students' proposal and we look forward to seeing the posters in due course.

*Chris Archibald and Fiona Clarke*



*In spite of the steep steps there was considerable interest in the hidden space at Pittville Gates.*



*One of the guided walks led visitors through Pittville Park and around Wellington and Clarence Squares.*

## A walk in the park

The heritage board in the west of the park has been replaced, re-positioned and the graphics refreshed to complement the welcome boards. We have also added a recently discovered image of the mill which stood beside the waterfall. The numbered sites of interest can be followed as a clockwise walk ending at The Boathouse. We thank CBC for sponsoring this FOP mini-project.

*Judy Langhorn*



*The newly painted duck food dispenser in the park, the work of NCS students.*

## 2018: The Royal Air Force centenary

In 1918 fifteen hundred Royal Air Force Cadet Pilots and Observers were billeted for several months in Cheltenham. It is highly likely that some were accommodated in Pittville. Does anyone have any family correspondence or house records which contain any references to such events?

In April next year, as part of the Borough's 'Cheltenham Remembers WW1' programme, the local branch of the RAF Association is mounting an exhibition at the Jet Age Museum at Gloucestershire Airport, Staverton over four weekends, to commemorate the formation of the Royal Air Force in April 1918, together with the establishment of the local aircraft industry in WW1.



*The Jet Age Museum Staverton will be mounting a commemorative exhibition in April 2018. Does anyone in Pittville have any relevant records to share?*

The exhibition will include audio-visual presentations, replica aircraft of the period, a simulated airfield workshop, memorabilia including pilot log books, early cryptographic machines on loan from GCHQ and accounts of the dramatic social and economic impact on the town of the influx of the young airmen and the extensive employment of women in support of the war effort. There will be plenty of activities for visitors of all ages to enjoy. Admission is free.

If anyone does have any relevant records and would like to share them, or indeed would like more details about the exhibition, please contact Tony Mason on 01242 526522 or at [richard.mason@sky.com](mailto:richard.mason@sky.com)

*Tony Mason*

## Allotments

Small privately run allotment gardens next to Windsor Street Care Home are available for local people. They are about 3 m x 3 m. Costs are an initial registration of £20 and then £10 each September.

Two plots are currently available. If you are interested, please ring Bill Harvey (01242 541149) for more information.

## Pittville Roundabout

The planting on Pittville Roundabout seems to divide opinion, with gardeners supporting the choice while others find the display somewhat muted. The plants are best seen from close up rather than from inside a vehicle while you, or the driver, is negotiating the traffic!



*Plants on Pittville Roundabout. Just visible is one of the bikes placed round the town to celebrate the Tour of Britain stage which ended in Cheltenham on 9 September.*

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Photos courtesy of Fiona Clarke, Terry Langhorn, Sandy Marshall and Hilary Simpson.

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