



FRIENDS *of* PITTVILLE

March 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 Spring edition of the Newsletter. In this issue, Judie Hodsdon provides an update on the Masterplan for the regeneration of Pittville Park and writes about the new planting in the garden at the Gates. Hilary Simpson writes about the considerable achievements of Pittville History Works as it celebrates five years since its establishment. Fiona Clarke reports back on changes that affect the management of the Pump Room, and the perspective of the Pump Room Action Group. Chris Archibald provides insight into the management of our award-winning park. Philippa Howell reports on the Quiz Night, and



A team at the recent Quiz Night

there is news about the annual Plant Sale and the Pride Picnic in the Park as well as details of a Cheltenham Horticultural Society trip.

Park Regeneration Masterplan: progress and next steps

Work has now started on clearing the west rockery by the upper lake. Unwanted shrubs have been cut back and the hard work of clearing stumps and ivy is proceeding. The stones are already more visible and there are some lovely new views across the lake. Later this year a few stones will be moved or put back and decisions made on the replanting, which will be carried out in the autumn. It is planned to balance interesting planting with space allowed for play. Clearing work on the east rockery will not start until after the west rockery has been replanted, to avoid both areas looking bare at the same time. Most of the work is being done by Friends of Pittville volunteers, with contractors – where necessary – felling trees, grinding stumps and retrieving stones from the lake. Meanwhile, an

assessment will be made of the planting along the eastern boundary to the south of the Pump Room (the east border), in the east rockery and on the south bank of the upper lake to determine which overgrown trees and shrubs should be trimmed/removed, and, for the east border, how gaps might be filled. The volunteers will be able to start work on the east border this year, while the major work on the south bank will be for another year – but unwanted growth will be kept under control to maintain the views across the lake to the Pump Room.

The next step in the work to improve the surroundings of the Pump Room – specifically replacing the ironwork of the gateways, putting back the missing set of steps to the south and, possibly, refurbishing the tarmac surfaces – is to draw up detailed plans suitable for costings, obtaining the necessary permissions and supporting funding applications. This will be done by the landscape architects Illman Young, paid for with income resulting from the tree-selling operation in the park before Christmas, and will be completed by early in the next financial year.

Judie Hodsdon



Volunteers at work on the west rockery

Details of the Masterplan can be found at:

http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/6484/pittville_park_study

Pittville History Works

Pittville History Works is five years old. Its database now includes more than 14,000 Pittville residents in 762 homes over a period of 133 years, from the building of Marle Hill House in 1806 until the outbreak of war in 1939. Data collection work is now focused on Cheltenham street directories from 1903 until 1945.

The group's website had an average of over 700 different visitors a month during 2018; website traffic has more than doubled in the last two years. Most visitors come from the United States, with the United Kingdom second.

Pittville themes investigated on the website include: WW1 casualties, the origins of Pittville's house names, women's suffrage supporters, lives of prominent residents, wealth from slavery, haunted Pittville, plans for an 1830s zoo, Pittville's baths, and preparatory schools in Pittville Circus Road. In addition, Steve Blake's out-of-print book *Pittville 1824-1860: a scene of gorgeous magnificence* has been scanned by the group and the text is now freely available on the site.

The group has organised a number of Heritage Open Days events, and commemorated Pittville's First World War fallen on the hundredth anniversary of the armistice. It has also been instrumental in obtaining two new blue plaques in Pittville. In August 2016 the group visited the Regency Town House project in Hove to see an 1820s town house being restored using traditional methods. In April 2017 the group, under leader John Simpson, was awarded a Citation from Cheltenham Arts Council in recognition of its work to unlock Pittville's past. Please visit the group's website at www.pittvillehistory.org.uk

Hilary Simpson

The 10-year management plan for Pittville Park

Pittville Park holds a Green Flag Award and is the only park in Gloucestershire to have Green Heritage Site accreditation. The work behind the scenes to gain these prestigious awards is considerable and Chris Archibald explains a little about how it is managed, and the partnership between Friends of Pittville and Cheltenham Borough Council.

In 2006, Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) was awarded a grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund to write a Conservation Management Plan for Pittville Park as part of a bid for a grant of £4m to be spent on the park and estate's improvement, restoration and development. Although the bid was very good, it was unsuccessful.

Nevertheless, even without the benefit of the grant funding, CBC adopted the Conservation Management Plan in 2008, and with the help of Friends of Pittville has been working to implement its proposals. It was always intended that a detailed 10-year plan would be written, based on this original management plan, which would guide the management, maintenance, restoration and development of the park. This was written in 2016 as part of the successful submission for the Green Flag Award and Green Heritage Site Accreditation.

Each year CBC has to re-apply for these awards, and together with Friends of Pittville it reviews the 10-year plan and modifies it as necessary. Achievements are recorded, problems discussed, and decisions made on how the goals for the following year can be achieved.

The 10-year management plan covering 2016 to 2026 has recently been reviewed and is available to read online if you would like to know more: www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/7203/pittville_park_management_plan_2016-2026

Friends of Pittville are helping CBC to maintain and develop the park through volunteering, and all the money we raise goes towards the restoration and development proposals set out in the plan. If you have any comments or thoughts on the plan please contact us or Green Space Development at Cheltenham Borough Council. *Chris Archibald*

Pittville Gates garden replanted

The garden at the Gates, first planted five years ago, was showing signs of struggling with the shade of the overhanging tree and from people walking across it. Late last year, with plants supplied by the Borough Council, a small team of volunteers applied compost and filled in the gaps, with water for the new plants kindly supplied by the Milliers from their house nearby. It is hoped that the new planting, when it has filled out, will provide interest throughout the year and cope better with the shade. *Judie Hodsdon*



Cheltenham Horticultural Society news

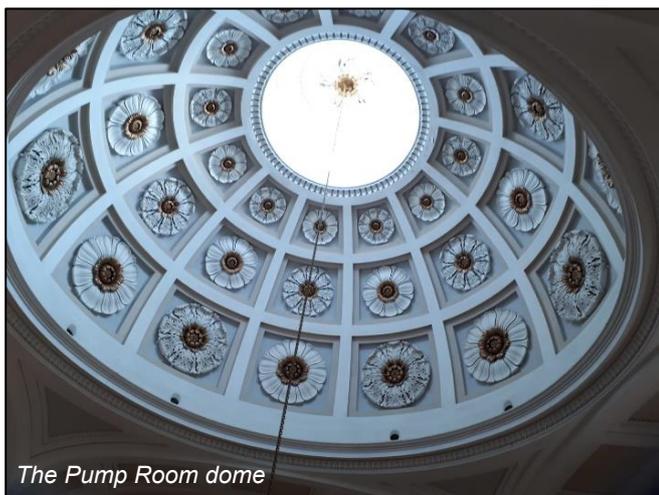
Spring Flower Show

Cheltenham Horticultural Society's Spring Flower Show is to take place on Sunday 24th March at Pittville Pump Room, 12.30-3.30, entrance £2. Friends of Pittville will be attending and plans for the forthcoming improvements in the park will be available for inspection.

Garden Holiday

The Horticultural Society is also arranging a Garden Holiday, based in a very nice hotel in Eastbourne. Gardens to be visited are Lullington Castle and Gardens, Nymans, Arundel Castle, Leonardslee, Bateman's and Wisley. The price for half board is £636.00. The organiser is Wendy Acres, who was formerly the Treasurer of Friends of Pittville. There are a small number of places still available. Pick up will be at Royal Well and at the racecourse. For further details, contact Richard or Wendy on 01242 241728. *David Richards*

Pump Room Action Group



The Pump Room dome

Our November 2018 report into the visitor experience at Pittville Pump Room was received with interest by The Cheltenham Trust's Chief Executive and by the Chair of its Board of Trustees, but so far no progress has been made on the issues raised in the report.

However, The Cheltenham Trust has set up an inquiry into the future use of the Pump Room and recently commissioned a survey for key stakeholders, which both Friends of Pittville and its Action Group have responded to.

Two members of PRAG met Sarah Robertson, just appointed on a one-year contract as Director, Programmes and Engagement, in early February, and discussed the current situation at the Trust

and its relationship with the Borough Council. Julie Finch, Chief Executive of The Cheltenham Trust, is leaving on 1 April and her post has been advertised on a short-term basis (one year with a possible extension to two). Sarah is keen to work with us on improving the basic services and facilities for visitors and we look forward to our next meeting with her in April.

One thing is puzzling us as visitors are reporting that for several months the mineral water has tasted 'just like tap water'. We can assure you that the tap is not connected to the mains water supply (as proposed by a member of staff there!) but it is a mystery which we will press to have investigated. Meanwhile the repairs to the Pump Room dome have been completed, which is good news.

Please let us know about your Pump Room experiences, good or bad, as this will provide important evidence for our campaign. Email us at pump-room-action-group@outlook.com

Fiona Clarke

Quiz Night a great success

Another successful fund-raising Quiz Night was held on 18 February. Organised by Friends of Pittville members Philippa Howell and Amanda Slayton-Joslin, it was hosted by Andy at the Feathered Fish with quizmaster Paul.

Philippa Howell with quizmaster, Paul



Members of Friends of Pittville brought their families and friends to make a record number of fifty-eight quizzers.

After costs, we made a profit of £370 from entry fees and raffle ticket sales. This will support Friends of Pittville's ongoing project to restore and improve Pittville Park in partnership with the Borough Council.

We would like to thank Amanda, all the staff at the Feathered Fish and all those who donated raffle prizes. We would also like to thank everyone who attended for helping to make the event such a great success.

Philippa Howell

Plant Sale

To raise funds to help Friends of Pittville improve the park

Saturday 4 May

10am -1 pm

**Central Cross Drive, Pittville GL52 2DX
(in front of the scout hut)**

Plants supplied by
Cheltenham Horticultural Society
Hoo House Nursery
Dundry Nurseries
Malcolm Allison Plants
Friends of Pittville members

We will also be holding a raffle!!

Registered charity number 1146790

Contributions from members are a popular part of the event – particularly plants in flower, but please bring along anything you can spare, including tomato and other vegetable plants.

'Drop Ins' back on trial basis from 28 March 2019



We are planning to reinstate the Friends of Pittville monthly drop-in session on a trial basis. The proposed venue is the basement of Havanas cafe. For those of you not familiar with Havanas, it is on the right-hand side of Prestbury Road, as you go into town from the north, near the letterbox. They serve excellent coffee and a tempting selection of cakes! We are proposing the last Thursday of each month, between 10am and noon. This timing is in order to avoid their busy lunchtime period. We hope that at least one FoP trustee will be present each time to answer your questions or receive feedback. The first session is planned for Thursday 28 March. We look forward to seeing you then.

Sue Walker and Liz Auster, FoP members

Pride Picnic in the Park

Pride in Gloucestershire will host a Pride Day in Cheltenham in Pittville Park on Sunday 12 May from 12 noon to 5pm. It will be a free, relaxed, family-friendly, fun-filled event for all to enjoy; visitors can expect live music, community stalls, a dog show, and food and drink on the lawn in front of the Pump Room.

Jordan Bonner, marketing manager for Pride in Gloucestershire, says: 'We have worked closely with Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham Borough Homes to get this event going. Both the Council and Pride are excited to be able to offer the LGBT+ community a safe space to celebrate and reflect.'

Appointment of trustees

At the first FoP Trustees meeting after the AGM, on 11 December, the trustees re-appointed Judie Hodsdon as Chairman, Fiona Clarke as Secretary and Paul Benfield as Treasurer.

Gloria Jones continues to be our Membership Secretary, Chris Archibald remains as our Green Space Volunteers Co-ordinator (and much more), Andy Hopkins stays on as editor of the newsletter, and Sandy Marshall takes over as the Pittville History Works representative. Other trustees are responsible for specific events and/or are members of one of the teams. One of our members, Jocelyn Potter, has kindly volunteered to take the minutes at our trustee meetings and at the AGM.

Hilary Simpson stood down as a trustee at the AGM, but continues to lead the Pump Room Action Group. She also maintained the website and Facebook page until new trustee Adrian Allen took over. Thanks to Hilary for her significant contribution as a trustee and as a founder member of the Pittville History Works group.

Editor

Andy Hopkins

Photos

Amanda Slayton-Joslin
Judie Hodsdon
Fiona and Tom Clarke
Andy Hopkins



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Registered charity number 1146790

