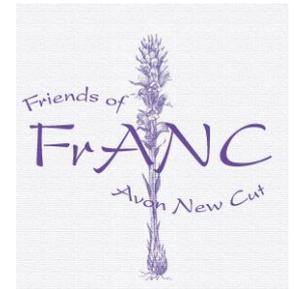


Friends of the Avon New Cut Newsletter 26 – Summer 2016



Welcome to our Summer 2016 Newsletter! Thank you for the very positive feedback received regarding our last Newsletter. In accordance with your suggestions, this issue also gives some information about things that are happening in the local area outside of FrANC. We hope you may find something of interest to you.

Forthcoming Events

“FrANC Fest” Celebration Event at St. Mary Redcliffe & Temple School on Sunday 2nd October

Join us at 1:00pm in the school’s lower dining hall for a celebration to mark FrANC’s 10th birthday and the completion of the various activities that have been funded by the “Sharing Heritage” grant that we received from the Heritage Lottery Fund last year.

The exact programme of events is in the process of being finalised but will include an exhibition of the New Cut’s history and wildlife, talks, films, music and a circular walk around the part of the riverbank between Bath Bridge and Bedminster Bridge. Light refreshments will be provided and, of course, birthday cake!

We’ll be circulating a flyer in early September which will contain final details, but in the meantime please keep this date free in your diary.

Bedminster/Southville Colliery Site Walk

This walk has been developed by Roy Gallop and will explore the coal mining heritage of the part of Bedminster and Southville between Dame Emily Park and *The Ashville* pub.

Although it was originally planned to hold this walk in September, we have since decided to postpone it until some time next year. We’ll let you know when it is after we have finalised our programme of events for 2017.

Previous Walks and Talks

We have organised three walks and talks since the publication of our last Newsletter, and our thanks go to:

John Penny for his very informative “*Illustrated Talk on the History of the Bristol Docks*” at the Southville Centre on Thursday 21st April.

Richard Bland for leading a Tree Walk along the York Road Riverbank on Sunday 5th June, during which over twenty different species of trees were identified:



Photo: Derek Hughes

Peter Andresen for an interesting Geological Walk between the Cumberland Basin and the Avon Gorge on Thursday 16th June:



Photo: Richard Clutterbuck

FrANC's logo

You will be aware that The Cut is a valuable wildlife corridor. Over 30 species of birds have been seen along The Cut and over 100 species of flowering plants, including the rare ivy broomrape (*orobanche hederæ*) which is our logo. This year the ivy broomrape, which is a root parasite of the ivy plant, has been in abundance. Here is a photograph that was taken during the Geological Walk in June when the plant was in full flower:



Photo: Sara Worth

Do you like Green Spaces?

Bristol has so many Green Spaces – large and small.

If you want to learn more about what is happening in all of them, go to

www.facebook.com/bristolcitycouncilparks/ where **Bristol Parks** share activities and issues affecting Green Spaces.

Another useful link

Download the **Bristol Parkhive** app on your mobile device by visiting

www.bristolparkhive.com

This app provides a map of 200 of Bristol's Parks and Green Spaces, with details of what each provides – play areas, cafés, disabled access, toilets, etc. It also gives directions for car users and public transport availability.

Prepare to be surprised at what is on your doorstep!

Website News

We reported in our last Newsletter that we were planning to develop a new website, having been awarded £1,000 from City Council Local Nature Reserve (LNR) funds for this purpose. We are pleased to report that this work is now underway, with the help of match funding provided by the University of the West of England (UWE). The new website will be built by two UWE software developers – Lisa Friedberg and Marton Gosztanyi – and will include much of the content of the existing website, as well as being a repository for all FrANC documentation (e.g. Constitution, minutes of AGMs, Committee Meetings and General Meetings, Newsletters and educational leaflets). The website will also be designed so that it can be easily updated by designated FrANC Committee Members – which is certainly not the case at present! Development of the new website should be completed in time for launch at the “FrANC Fest” at the beginning of October.

Clearance of rubbish from New Cut riverbed

We remain hopeful of finding a solution to the enormous amounts of rubbish lodged in the riverbed of the New Cut.



Photo: Sara Worth

During one of our Clean-up sessions along York Road earlier this year we were approached by a member of Avon Fire and Rescue, who are currently considering if they can assist in some way by incorporating the task of rubbish removal into a useful training event for fire-fighters.

There may also be some assistance forthcoming from a local diving clubso watch this space!

Progress on activities funded by “Sharing Heritage” grant

Towards the end of last year we were awarded a £9,900 “Sharing Heritage” grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to improve the New Cut riverbank, focussing on the area between Bedminster Bridge and Bath Bridge.

We have made tremendous progress. We firstly employed *ParkWork* and *Volunteering Matters* to cut back overgrown trees and clear excess vegetation from the York Road riverbank in February. FrANC volunteers then stepped in to tackle the mass of litter and rubbish that this work uncovered. In varying numbers (a total of 37 FrANC volunteers took part) we visited the site *fourteen times* between the end of February and the beginning of June. We clocked up a total of *200 volunteer hours* clearing the litter.....and the result is amazing! So many people stopped to thank us or beeped their horns as they drove by and by the time we had our Tree Walk at the beginning of June we could really see the benefit to the complete length of the York Road riverbank.

We would like to say a big “thank-you” to Stephanie Fowler from motorcycle retailers *Fowlers*, who not only donated the sum of £60 towards the cost of post Clean-up refreshments but also provided tea and bacon butties at Harry’s Café, free of charge, following the litter picking session on 30th April.

Two new Interpretation Boards were also installed at the beginning of August at Bathurst Basin and Bath Bridge (on York Road, opposite *Fowlers*). This brings the total number of Interpretation Boards that FrANC has been involved in installing around the New Cut to eight. The task of designing a leaflet describing a number of Circular Walks around the New Cut, with links to the Interpretation Boards, is currently in progress.

Two new benches are also now in place on Clarence Road. From feedback received about possible bench locations, the overall view was that the traffic is less busy here, with additional protection from the road due to the cycle lane – and Clarence Road is on ‘the sunny side’ of the New Cut! A big “thank-you” to the Council’s Nature Conservation Officer, Becky Belfin, for helping to move things along.



Rubbish collected during 11th York Road Riverbank Clean-up on 14th May



New Interpretations Boards at Bathurst Basin (top photo) and Bath Bridge (bottom photo)



New benches installed on Clarence Road

We continue to talk LITTER!

In addition to the 200 hours of litter-picking along York Road, FrANC volunteers spent an additional 142 hours doing three organised Clean-ups along Coronation Road, Cumberland Road and Commercial Road in January, February and March of this year. Well done everyone who contributed – whether you were able to offer 2 hours or 20 hours of your time, we have valued your support. Thanks also to the many people who pick up litter outside their homes or whilst walking along to the shops.

How long does it take for something to bio-degrade?

Whilst attending the Bristol Festival of Nature during the weekend of 11th/12th June, FrANC members noticed the following poster which made us stop and think:



Photo: Sarah Morris

For those of you who don't possess telescopic X-ray vision, and focussing on the items that we usually encounter during our Clean-ups, according to the above poster the time taken for the following items to completely bio-degrade is:

Paper Towel:	2 – 4 weeks
Newspaper:	6 weeks
Waxed Carton:	3 months
Cigarette filter:	1 – 5 years
Aluminium Can:	80 – 200 years
Food Wrapper:	200 years
Plastic Bottle:	450 years

This shows what an important effect each bag of rubbish we collect has on the environment!

Community Litter Wardens

A few months ago the FrANC Chair, Sara Worth, applied to the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) for FrANC volunteers to be recognised as “Community Litter Wardens”. With this status comes a commitment to supplement our current organised Clean-up activities with the occasional impromptu ‘wander along The Cut’ to keep it tidy and litter-free.

Sara recently attended a CPRE event at Bristol Zoo, as a result of which she is now an officially-recognised Community Litter Warden – as can be seen from the photo below:



Photo: CPRE

The eagle-eyed amongst you may recognise two other FrANC volunteers in the above photo – Margaret Fay and Cynthia Palmer – who also went along to support FrANC (and Sara).

On a more practical note, we were able to acquire 15 additional standard-length and two 6-foot litter-pickers, as well as a dozen yellow hi-vis vests. We also picked up 16 “handi hoops”, which are used to keep litter bags open (those of you who have wrestled with litter bags on windy days will recognise how useful these will be!). On top of all this, we were also awarded 100 Bristol pounds, which we plan to use to help fund the cost of providing post Clean-up refreshments next year. A BIG “thank-you” to CPRE for providing us with all this kit.....it will serve us (and The Cut) well!

The 15 additional standard-length litter-pickers will supplement the 16 that we already have, which means that from now on there should be no need for us to have to borrow litter-pickers from the City Council for future Clean-ups.

Big Butterfly Count at Butterfly Junction – the results!

As in previous years, between 15th July and 7th August FrANC carried out a survey of the butterfly population at Butterfly Junction, as part of the annual nationwide Big Butterfly Count organised by *Butterfly Conservation*.



The results of the survey have now been collated and are listed in the table below, where the table columns list the date and start time of each survey period, the initials of the observer and the numbers of each butterfly species that were seen over a 15-minute period. The table rows contain the results for the dates and times at which each 15-minute survey was conducted. In all a total of seven visits were made to Butterfly Junction to record butterfly sightings by those who took part in the survey.

A simple summation of the numbers observed of each particular species could be misleading

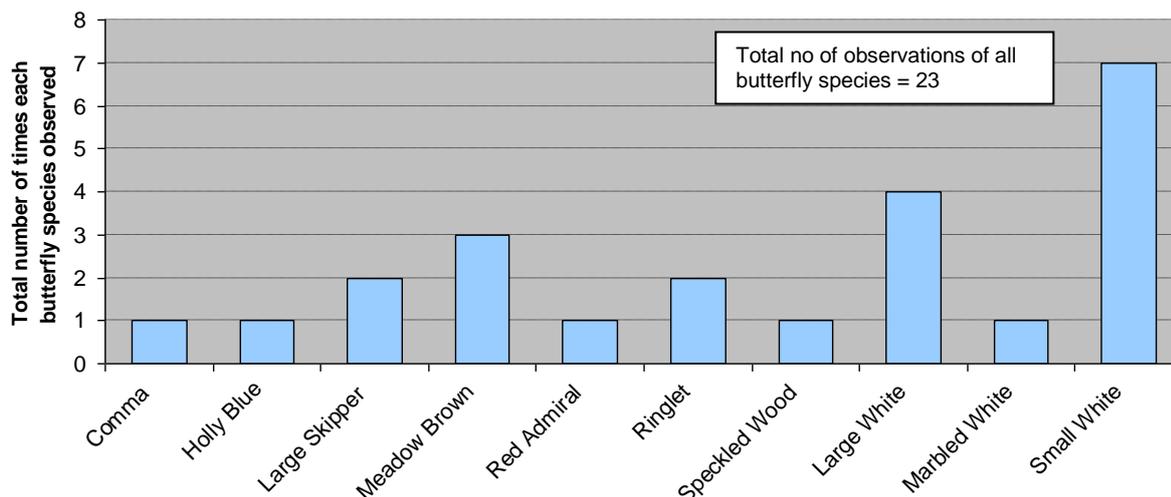
as it is possible that the same individual butterfly could be seen by different observers on different days (or, in some instances, on even the same day). Consequently, the bar chart at the bottom of the page simply records the total number of times that each butterfly species was observed during the 23 observations that were made.

A total of 10 different butterfly species were seen, the most frequent being Large or Small Whites and Meadow Browns. Large Skipper and Ringlet were observed during two of the visits, but the other five species were seen only once.

The number of site visits this year (7) was somewhat less than last year (23). However, there were apparently no sightings of Common Blue butterflies this year, which were the highest-recorded species last year.

Thanks are due to the seven observers – Jane and Richard Clutterbuck, Margaret Fay, Angie Tonge, Derek Hughes, Sara Worth and Hebe Welbourn – who took part in this year's survey.

Date	Start Time	Initials of Observer	Number of butterfly species observed during 15-minute period after start time									
			Comma	Holly Blue	Large Skipper	Meadow Brown	Red Admiral	Ringlet	Speckled Wood	Large White	Marbled White	Small White
15/07/2016	18:00	JC			2			1		3		1
16/07/2016	18:00	JC				1						1
18/07/2016	14:00	MF/ AT			2				3			1
19/07/2016	13:00	RC		1			1			1		4
21/07/2016	13:00	RC			1							1
05/08/2016	15:40	DH / SW							9			2
06/08/2016	14:15	HW	1	1			1	2	3			3



Follow Bristol's Treasure Island Trail

The Long John Silver Trust was formed to promote Robert Louis Stephenson's connection with Bristol. The Floating Harbour and the Avon New Cut were very new when Stephenson stayed with a friend at Hill House, Clifton. He was so impressed by the hustle and bustle of the harbour scene that it inspired his famous book, "Treasure Island".

The **Treasure Island Trail**, developed by the trust, starts at the end of King Street near the City Centre (Merchant Venturers/Almshouses) and follows the dockside to Merchants Landing via Welsh Back, *The Hole in the Wall*, Redcliffe Caves and *The Ostrich*.



The trail is marked with eight wine casks, each of which has been planted with date palms and tells the story of "Treasure Island" in brief episodes. An app can be downloaded from the casks which gives a commentary at each station. The trail received a European Culture Award in 2015. For more information, visit www.longjohnsilvertrust.co.uk.

Water City Bristol – proposed “Tidal Twinning” with Friends of Lamplighter’s Marsh

Water City Bristol (WCB) is a three-year (2014 – 2017) project that involves community partners, artists and academics in exploring people's changing relationships with water, nature and community through aspects of their local environment. It is part of a large arts and communities project called *Towards Hydrocitizenship*, and is one of four study areas in the UK.

Currently, four different themes are being explored as part of the project – *Hidden Ecologies–Eels*, *Daylighting Hidden Waterways*, *Tidal Reaches* and *Caring for Water Infrastructure*. Under the *Tidal Reaches* theme, WCB have begun investigating the tides, both in Bristol and as far out as Severn Beach, and have been talking with people who use the inter-tidal stretches of land or whose work involves an awareness of the tides.

As part of this, WCB are keen to establish a “Tidal Twinning” link between FrANC and another local volunteer group – Friends of Lamplighter’s Marsh (FOLM) – who, like FrANC, also help to look after a stretch of river that is tidal. The FrANC Committee are supportive of this initiative, and we will be exploring how this “Tidal Twinning” arrangement can be developed later in the autumn. In the meantime, WCB have agreed to help us plan our “FrANC Fest” celebration in October.

If you want to find out more about WCB or FOLM, visit www.watercitybristol.org or www.folm.org.uk.

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

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Bristol BS3 1QG

Website: www.franc.org.uk

If you are not on our mailing list and you would like to be, please contact us through the above website or via our Secretary, Derek Hughes (Tel: 0117 954 4888)