

Friends of the Avon New Cut Newsletter 8 – Summer 2008



The Avon New Cut Local Nature Reserve

Sounds good doesn't it? As part of next year's celebration of the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Cut, we hope to see this valuable wildlife corridor formally recognised as a Local Nature Reserve. As far as we can tell, the Cut already meets the criteria set down by Natural England – and no other Local Nature Reserves exist in the city centre. We have begun a campaign to convince Bristol City Council that the Cut is long overdue this accolade.

We are planning an awareness-raising event in October, and will be seeking support for the campaign from local people, local companies and a range of organisations. Watch out for more details in the next newsletter.

Cut 200

Other plans are beginning to evolve for next year's celebrations. How much we can do will depend on how many people offer their active support, but we are currently planning:

- A party on Vauxhall Bridge, including train rides and bus tours around the Cut
- An arts event on Gaol Ferry Bridge
- New seating
- A photographic exhibition.

The exhibition will be held in the Create Centre and other venues in 2009 and will contain pictures of people's favourite views and features of the Cut – including bridges, buildings and wildlife such as birds and bugs, trees and flowers. Now is the time to start taking your photographs!

Forthcoming events

Our next FrANC meeting

Thursday 5th June

Starting at 7.30pm in the Southville Centre. We shall be discussing ideas for improving access to the Cut, planning our campaign to have the Cut officially recognised as a Local Nature Reserve, and preparing celebrations for next year's 200th anniversary of the opening of the Cut. All welcome.

Create Centre Ecohome Open Day

Sunday 8th June

11am to 4pm. Fun for all the family including butterfly arts activities and 'spot the butterflies' at Butterfly Junction. Café open and barbeque (weather permitting).

Discovering bugs on the Cut

Activities are planned for Tuesday 3rd June (10.30am), Saturday 21st June (2.00pm) and Sunday 29th June (10.30am). Further details available from Ben Barker (benbarker@blueyonder.co.uk)

Malago Trek - Sunday 13th July

Starts in Bedminster (ASDA car park) at 10.00am. The walk follows the course of the Malago, finishing near the source of the river on Dundry Slopes at around 1.00pm.

Colliter's Brook Trail - Sunday 27th July

Starts at the Create Centre at 10.00am finishing with a picnic at Hanging Hill Wood at around 12.00. Return the same way or catch a bus on the nearby A38. The walk is around 2 miles each way. Both of these walks have been organised by the South Bristol Riverscapes Project.

What a load of rubbish!

Thanks to a grant from the Safer Bristol Partnership, FrANC was able to employ a contractor to clean up the steep bank on Coronation Road opposite ASDA in March. The bank looked good for a while but sadly the litter has reappeared – largely because ASDA has still not taken measures to prevent bags and other litter blowing across the road from its car park, as its manager assured us he would do. The Council's 'Waste and Streetscene Enforcement Officer' has recently visited the store, and we are hopeful that ASDA will eventually support our efforts to tidy up the Cut.



Photo by Richard Clutterbuck

The officer has also visited staff at the Jet garage and TES tyres on Coronation Road regarding rubbish dumped on the riverbank at the rear of their premises. Steps are being taken to clean up the mess. FrANC has written to these companies and nearby businesses to inform them about our efforts to clean up the Cut, and to request them to do their bit to help.

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

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See also www.southvillecentre.org.uk

If you are not on our mailing list and would like to be, please send your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address to FrANC's secretary John Purkiss (johnpurkiss@talk21.com) or leave a note for him at the Southville Centre.

News in brief

South Bristol Riverscapes Project

This new project aims to improve waterways in the south of Bristol and involve more people in river support groups such as FrANC. We have been pleased to welcome Helen Adshead (development worker) to our recent events and we look forward to her continued involvement with FrANC.

The Chocolate Path

We have met with the Docks Manager, who has accepted our concern about the loss of plants on the Chocolate Path last summer and has placed on record our request that in future the plants be cut back after the flowering season and that plants growing up the railings adjacent to the railway be retained wherever possible.

Bus Rapid Transit System

We are aware of a proposal to develop a Bus Rapid Transit system alongside the Cut, which is likely to have a detrimental effect on this invaluable wildlife corridor. We also fear it might reduce or even obliterate the Chocolate Path – a route into the city centre that is very popular with cyclists and pedestrians. We are having difficulty finding out details of what is actually proposed, but we understand that public consultation will start during June or July. We shall circulate more details as soon as we have them.

Riverbank clean-ups

Our thanks to all the volunteers who helped to remove over 1 tonne of rubbish from the riverbanks during the winter. Thanks too to Bristol City Council's Waste Services department who, at our request, have installed a new litterbin adjacent to God's Garden on Cumberland Road.

Power from the Cut

We have sent information on river flows to Loadpoint Ltd, who are now analysing the figures and will report on the possibility of designing a turbine to be placed in the Cut.

FrANC Annual General Meeting

We are planning to combine a brief AGM with a wildlife walk. Date to be confirmed.