

# Friends of the Avon New Cut Newsletter 11 – Spring 2009



**Celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Cut  
Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

**Fun Day  
12.30pm to 5pm next to  
Brunel's ss Great Britain**

Inspired by the 1809 opening ceremony and party enjoyed by the Irish builders and Bristol citizens, the Friends of the Avon New Cut have organised a fun-filled day. Brunel's ss Great Britain is running a hog roast, the Bristol Beer Factory has produced a special "Cut Blaster" beer, and entertainment for the whole family includes:

- Tales of the Cut with an Irish actor and "Show of Strength" theatre group
- Irish dancers and Morris dancers
- A jazz band (also performing on the Harbourside train)
- Sea shanty singers
- A treasure hunt plus other fun and games for children
- Fascinating facts and images of the New Cut and Floating Harbour.

**Drop in any time. This is a free event!**

The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Royston Griffey, will formally open the event at 1pm.

**See overleaf for more information on  
why we are celebrating!**

**Cut 200 Party  
7pm to 11pm  
on the Grain Barge**

Celebrate with local Irish band **Sergeant Early's Dream**. Tickets are available from the Southville Centre at £4 each. If any tickets remain unsold by 4 May, they will be available on the door for £5. Our special "Cut Blaster" beer will be on sale at the bar!



*Illustration by Roy Gallop*

## **Photographic Exhibitions**

Admire photographs of local people's favourite views and features of the Cut - including bridges, buildings and wildlife.

14<sup>th</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> May at the Southville Centre (weekdays 9am to 8pm).

6<sup>th</sup> May to 15<sup>th</sup> May at the Create Centre (weekdays 9am to 6pm).

## A reason to celebrate!

Bristol's port was originally sited in the centre of the city on the River Avon. It was the second-busiest port in the country during the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, but the tidal nature of the river increasingly caused problems for ships. Traders began to use other ports instead, and a solution was needed if Bristol was to maintain its wealth.

William Jessop, a civil engineer, developed a plan to divert the River Avon away from the docks area through a new artificial channel - or cut - leaving the docks as a "floating harbour". Work started in May 1804.

The Cut was dug by Irish and other travelling labourers or "navvies". They mainly used picks, shovels and wheelbarrows, but also gunpowder to blast a way through the rock. Mechanical excavators and lorries were not available in those days! The work was slow but was finally completed in 1809.

## Other dates for your diary

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May – FrANC meeting to discuss (i) the effect on the Cut of the Bus Rapid Transit system and (ii) the next stages of the South Bristol Riverscapes project. 7.30pm at the Southville Centre.

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May – Colliter's Brook Trek. Meet at the Create Centre at 10.00am.

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July - Guided walk along the Cut to discover the herbs that grow there. Meet at Spike Island café at 7.30pm. Preceded by FrANC's Annual General Meeting at 7.00pm in the café.

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July – our annual New Cut Trek led by Roy Gallop, this year focusing on Cumberland Basin and Jessop's engineering works. Meet at the Create Centre at 10.30am.

## News in brief

### Cleaning up the riverbanks

Over 30 people helped to clean up the accessible parts of the Cumberland Road and Coronation Road riverbanks during the winter. Thanks to their hard work, the banks look a whole lot better. We are now writing to nearby householders to ask them not to dump garden waste on the banks and we are encouraging the City Council to clear debris from the riverbed.

### Bus Rapid Transit System

The second stage of public consultation on this scheme is likely to commence later in the year. Precise details of the route along Cumberland Road and onwards to the City Centre and Temple Meads remain unclear, but we need to be ready to respond to the proposals. We shall be discussing this issue at a special meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May (7.30pm at the Southville Centre). All welcome.

**Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)**  
c/o The Southville Centre, Beaulay Road,  
Bristol BS3 1QG.  
Tel: 0117 923 1039.  
See also [www.southvillecentre.org.uk](http://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](mailto:johnpurkiss@talk21.com)) or leave a note for him at the Southville Centre.

Special thanks to our New Cut 200 sponsors



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