

Friends of the Avon New Cut Newsletter 21 – Summer 2014



It is six months since our last Newsletter – and FrANC members have been very productive in that time. The website now hosts some great photography of The Cut and FrANC activities; we've had several impromptu litter picks as well as three bigger organised events; and we have started to make links with other organisations in the city, which has proved beneficial to all.

FrANC is a great organisation, so please help us in our determination that it will thrive and grow.

Thank you for your support.

Events over the Summer

Tuesday 20th May 2014

FrANC's contribution to Bristol Walking Festival month saw us hosting a Medicinal Herb Walk on a section of The Cut. This was attended by 30 people, comprising some FrANC members and others who had heard about us through the publicity of the Walking Festival. We were all captivated by the knowledge of medicinal herbalist Iain Stewart. The plethora of herbs in the small area of Gaol Ferry Bridge and adjacent churchyard meant that 'walk' was a bit of an overstatement as we probably only travelled a few hundred yards! Nevertheless, the event feedback forms (in use for the first time at FrANC) confirmed that everyone had found the topic interesting, the event had lasted the 'right length of time' and that the use of our newly-acquired portable voice amplifier had ensured that everyone could hear the speaker well.

Treasure Island aboard the *Matthew* – Sunday 22nd June 2014

This is not strictly a FrANC event, but as many of our FrANC 'favourite people' are involved we wanted to draw your attention to it. For more information, including ticket purchase,

please go to *The Matthew of Bristol* website or enquire at the M Shed. There will be two sailings around the harbour on the day – which will include re-enactments of Robert Louis Stevenson's literary classic by members of the Long John Silver Trust.

Geological Walk – Wednesday evening 9th July 2014

We agreed at the AGM that we'd like to have one event each year identified as a 'John Purkiss Memorial Event' and the Geological Walk booked for the above date has been identified as such for 2014. This topic is a first for FrANC and we hope to see many of you there. We will send an e-mail with details of start time and meeting point nearer the date. There will be a charge of £2 per person to help cover costs.

Walks around The Cut

We have again been able to respond to several requests for guided walks around The Cut. It is always a great privilege to show off the area and tell people a little about its wildlife and history. Those participating often have their own stories to add – which bring a unique quality to each occasion.

Rubbish!

Three more successful litter picks have been completed this year and the battle goes on. When we undertook our third session in early March opposite ASDA, they were good enough to offer us their hospitality room afterwards where we enjoyed our usual tea/coffee and cakes after two hours of hard but satisfying work. Over the three sessions we estimate that collectively we undertook around 120 hours of litter picking. It was also great to have some young people join us at one event.....we are conscious that for FrANC to flourish we need some young members as well as relying on those of us who have been around a while!

We had very much hoped to report on progress regarding the removal of bulk rubbish behind the garage on Coronation Road and on the bank along York Road where there are large items including sofas, fridges, etc. Despite Bristol City Council (BCC) providing the finances and getting an undertaking from May Gurney early last summer to tackle the work this spring, May Gurney ultimately let us down – by saying there were Health and Safety issues, etc. The Committee is in consultation with the Docks Estates Manager, Eric Dougall, who has been helpful but we haven't yet found a solution. If you have any ideas please let us know; we will now be waiting for the undergrowth to die down before it is worth progressing – probably next January/February. BCC also has enough money put aside to remove the scaffolding that is stuck in the mud in the centre of The Cut.

Thank you to those FrANC members who have undertaken some impromptu litter picking prior to events – to ensure The Cut is at its best. We are grateful to the Waste Disposal teams for their help in collecting this rubbish when we have alerted them.

MetroBus update

The MetroBus preferred route has been confirmed as along Cumberland Road, after crossing The Cut by Butterfly Junction. We continue to be concerned about the impact on this area, especially during construction and will be proactive in promoting the preservation of the wildlife, flora and fauna throughout the project.

Our tree is flourishing



The picture above was taken at the time of the planting of the tree by the FrANC bench on the Chocolate Path, following the AGM in December 2013.

On checking last week we are pleased to say that it is flourishing and now has a plaque in front of it – commemorated to the life of John Purkiss, the “first friend of the Avon New Cut”.

Wild City

The Wild City Project has now come to a close. FrANC wishes to acknowledge Wild City input in its final year towards:

- completion of the 5-year Management Plan for The Cut;
- the planned Local Nature Reserve status for the New Cut;
- the refurbishment of three Interpretation Boards;
- the purchase of two portable voice amplifiers.

Raising Funds

FrANC was recently approached by John Sisk & Sons – the constructors at Wapping Wharf – asking for suggestions for local initiatives that they can assist with. We have responded with a ‘wish list’ and have yet to hear back from them. We feel that we need to ‘boost our funds’ a little and would welcome your ideas on how we might do so.



Help us keep The Cut looking beautiful

If YOU spot overflowing bins, graffiti, fly tipping or abandoned supermarket trolleys anywhere along The Cut, we urge you to report details to BCC Customer Services - tel. 0117 922 2100 - or via www.bristol.gov.uk (for any concern you have).

We've found the graffiti team to be very good even though they are overstretched – the problem is often dealt with within 48 hours.

Please don't assume that someone else has reported it. Simply make that contact! The more reports they receive, the more likely they are to act.

Let's Celebrate

Each member of FrANC brings their own special contribution; whether you are 'litter pickers', attendees at our walks, helpers with our meadow management of Butterfly Junction or a patient trainer on how to use the website. There are also many BCC employees and members of other organisations who give their encouragement to FrANC's efforts.

We realise that people have different amounts of leisure time to give and are often involved in several projects; at present we circulate information to over 150 households. If anyone has a suggestion as to how FrANC might develop or consider different activities within the parameters of our remit (see opposite) please contact us – details are given below:

This is what FrANC is all about....

The Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC) started life as a formally constituted group in May 2006.

FrANC's objectives are stated in its Constitution, which are to:

- (a) Facilitate the preservation, enhancement and improvement of the Avon New Cut for the benefit of people and wildlife;
- (b) Encourage and develop responsible use and care for the Avon New Cut amongst local residents, businesses and organisations;
- (c) Work in partnership with Bristol City Council and others to safeguard, maintain and develop the Avon New Cut as a valuable watercourse and wildlife area;
- (d) Educate the general public in the history, wildlife and geology of the Avon New Cut.

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

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If you are not on our mailing list, but you would like to be, please contact us via the above e-mail address or leave a note for FrANC at the Southville Centre.