

THE BISHOPSTON SOCIETY  
Summer 2013  
Newsletter



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*The Bishopston Society promotes high standards of planning and architecture in and around Bishopston and aims to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest.*

**[www.bishopstonsociety.org.uk](http://www.bishopstonsociety.org.uk)**

## Chair's Report

Since my winter report, important events have signalled changes in Bishopston as well as in Bristol and the surrounding region. At our public meeting in March, Bristol's mayor, George Ferguson told us about his vision for the city, setting out some of his priorities. Striving for Bristol's future as European Green Capital (its bid having just missed last time around) means continuing to focus on recycling, energy efficiency and tree-planting. He also spoke about developing the Temple Meads area as a gateway to the city, linking it with the SS Great Britain to form a 'Brunel Mile'. An additional priority is transport, he said - raising the issue of residents' parking schemes as one priority.

Over the coming months this issue will become a hot topic during the consultation process, though Bishopston will be one of the last neighbourhoods to be considered. Sadly the mayor has no powers other than persuasiveness and commitment to bring about an integrated public transport system which is the key to success for residents' parking schemes.

This issue was broached at the recent Bishopston Forum, when a representative from the Highways department of Bristol City Council spoke to the meeting about the consultation process related to the rolling out of residents' parking schemes across the city; in a small group discussion that followed, various views were expressed.

The meeting's main speaker, however, was Sue Mountstevens, Avon and Somerset's new Police and Crime Commissioner. She stressed her desire to serve as a listening post for citizens' feedback (and gave a contact telephone number: 01275 816377). She also mentioned that she holds the budget for Avon and Somerset Police - which suggests she can influence priorities.

The local elections in early May brought changes for two of our members: Bev Knott, who has retired after years of indefatigable service, and Daniella Radice, newly elected as ward councillor to succeed him, each of whom has contributed an article to this newsletter. We extend a welcome to Daniella and wish her luck in this challenging local position - and our thanks and good wishes go to Bev, who may find time to do all the things he has had to put off because of his commitments as our councillor.

After a particularly long winter, warmer weather finally arrived for the neighbourhood celebrations on the weekend of 11-12 May. These included an Open Gardens event, which raised over £1700 for charity. Most of this went toward the greening of Gloucester Road by helping provide hanging baskets of flowers on lamp-posts. The Golden Hill Community Garden also held a successful open day that weekend.

Whatever the weather, another event to put in your diaries is the Society's AGM on Monday 30th September. Our speaker will be Mark Allen for the Spence Practice who will bring us up to date on the development of the old Bristol North Baths site into a Health Centre and new library, which should be nearing completion by then.

A representative from Transport Services for Bristol City Council will also talk about the pleasure, usefulness and convenience of the Gloucester Road for its local users.

More details and background information are available on our ever-improving website: [www.bishopstonsociety.org.uk](http://www.bishopstonsociety.org.uk). Why not give it a try?

**Elinor Edwards**

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### **How it feels to be elected Councillor for Bishopston and how I see my role**

It is a privilege to have been elected as a Councillor for Bishopston. Although I thought I had a good chance of winning, it was still a surprise. I've been interested in politics for a long time and have been a member of the Green Party for over 10 years. As an environmentalist by profession I have recognised that legislation and political leadership are essential in reducing the impact we have on the environment and that serious issues such as climate change can only be tackled through political decisions.

I am here to represent your views on the council as well as working

towards making Bristol a more sustainable and equal city. So far I have been appointed to be the Green Party representative on the following bodies:

- Health and Wellbeing Board, a body set up under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. "This is a forum where key leaders from the health and care system will work together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities. Board members will collaborate to understand their local community's needs, agree priorities and encourage commissioners to work in a more joined up way. As a result, patients and the public should experience more joined-up services from the NHS and local councils in the future. <http://healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/hwb-guide/>
- The Women's Commission which has been set up to include key agencies in the city and will form working parties to look at various aspects of gender equality. It follows from the Mayor signing the European Charter for Equality between women and men.
- Development Control for the south and east of the city.

Something that really became clear to me when I stood as a candidate for the Mayor of Bristol is the lack of representation of women in this country in politics and in Bristol in particular. Following the May elections there are 20 women councillors out of 70 (28%). Women make up 51% of the population and I believe that the proportion of councillors should be similar. Earlier this year I formed a cross-party working group whose aim is to increase the number of women councillors in Bristol. We are looking at a number of ways in which we can encourage more women to get involved in local politics. If you are reading this and are interested, please get in touch!

I would like to emphasise to you how important both the Neighbourhood Partnerships and Bishopston Forum are. The Neighbourhood Partnership includes Bishopston, Cotham and Redland councillors and local community representatives, including a representative from the Bishopston Society. It considers a number of local issues, makes grants to local community groups and is consulted on matters such as the residents' parking scheme. The Mayor is considering devolving more powers to the Neighbourhood Partnerships across the city so it is important that they are representative of their local wards.

The Bishopston Forum is a ward specific group. It meets quarterly and is a venue where people can network, hear speakers and talk to council officers about services. Recently the Police and Crime Commissioner came to talk about her priorities for Bristol. The session includes a chance to discuss important issues in the ward, get feedback on what has been done about issues raised in the past, and the Forum has the potential to become a dynamic and lively group.

Having campaigned on two recent planning applications, Gloucestershire County Cricket Ground and the Sainsbury's store at the Memorial Ground, I take a keen interest in planning. In the few weeks since being elected, I have become aware of two proposed schemes in Bishopston to build houses in gardens. I am concerned about this trend in our already densely populated ward and I will be asking the planning department on guidance on how this can be discouraged through planning policy. Likewise, I understand that the planning policies regarding Gloucester Road were deemed inadequate by the Planning Inspector at the Costa Coffee inquiry. So I think that there is some work to be done on local planning policy.

**Daniella Radice**

## **Some thoughts on being a councillor, now I've retired**

"I can walk on water". That was the irreverent and rather over-the-top thought that kept going through my head after the big victory I scored as LibDem candidate for Bishopston Ward in 2009. To be charitable, (though political success is a heady experience, especially as I'd never intended to be a politician) perhaps the idea is better expressed that it looked as if we'd been doing the right thing locally. But complacency is dangerous; as I used to remark to my old colleague David Kitson, it was only a few years before he took over from Labour that they achieved a massive victory in Bishopston. And if you go back to the 70's, it used to be a very safe seat for the Conservatives. Bishopstonians like to ring the changes every so often.

So we kept in touch via our leaflets and 'Bishopston Matters' and continued to work on local issues. That seemed to work well, with David Willingham getting as good a vote in 2010 as I had the previous year. And some of the best successes were yet to come - the opening of Brunel Field

as part of Ashley Down Primary School, then work started on an extension to double its intake; the start at long last on work for Bishopston's new library and medical centre; agreement for new children's play areas on Horfield Common and next to Dirac Road; 4 new road crossings and other road safety improvements, and much else. So what could go wrong electorally?

One change in the political landscape was the failure of the Conservatives to gain a majority in the 2010 General Election, despite the utter rejection of the Labour Government. I think it was the responsible course for LibDems to go into coalition to form a stable government at a time of economic crisis. But the LibDems have paid dearly for that step.

A momentous change locally was the decision by Bristolians, albeit by a narrow majority on a low turnout, to go for a Mayoral system. As momentous, but again on a low turnout, was the election of an Independent Mayor. In my opinion this was a mistake. I opposed the Mayoral system because I thought it would give too much unaccountable power to one person, and this was made even worse by the election of an Independent who was able, eventually, to coerce all the other parties into his Cabinet even though he makes all the decisions and they are no more than assistants.

I think people (a pretty small minority overall, we must remember) thought George would now enact all their individual pet schemes, this being, in their individual opinions, the obvious thing to do. But as my short experience in Cabinet showed me, it is rarely obviously crystal clear what to do, and policies had to emerge, often with difficulty, through a process of debate and reformulation over a period of time. Crucial in this process is the challenge and probing from opposition Parties. This can at times descend into or appear to be what George famously called 'bickering', instead of getting on with things. But I think this is a price worth paying for a proper democratic examination of issues. Democracy is not a tidy system but in my view it does depend on a multiparty political landscape that offers differing views and values, and can, and must, challenge the actions of the 'big battalions' in power.

However, of the Bishopstonians who actually voted in the Mayoral election, a majority did not take the views expressed above. They wanted a Mayor and they wanted an Independent Mayor, quite decisively. But when it came to the local elections this May, this didn't help the Independent Party Candidate, and it was the Green Party which triumphed - again on an historically low turnout.

It's a bit banal I know, but I say the only thing I've learned about politics is that you never know what's going to happen next. I did think with our solid record of local achievement that the LibDems would survive, but with a lower majority because of the national situation. We shall have to see whether the Green Party can trump our LibDem green record. And it's too early to pronounce on the mayoral experiment - so far George has quietly got on with many things people were angry about, such as the Social Care decisions and BRT. Most of the things he's announced so far are LibDem policies coming through the pipeline, but he has now made a major decision of his own, about Residents' Parking, and we shall have to see where that goes.

**Bev Knott**

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### **A view from one of our members regarding Residents' Parking**

I live in the Redland Ward, postal address is Bishopston but am in the St Andrew's proposed parking zone - where is the logic in that?! I feel that these areas are all too small. It would be far more sensible for the council tax payers, who in fact are the residents, to have one residents' parking area instead of the 18 separate proposed areas. This would really reduce the administration costs dramatically. Obviously there would need to be consultation in the different NP areas to iron out any idiosyncrasies between them.

If there were to be residents' parking, say between the limited periods of 9 am - 10 am and then 4 pm to 5 pm, most of the commuter parking problem would be cut out, which is a trial and tribulation in some areas - especially round the Redland Station area. This would allow flexibility for residents, cut out a lot of 'monitoring' of the area, i.e. be far cheaper to police - and so would result in cheaper parking permits for residents and also allow shoppers to shop on Gloucester Road and other shopping areas. Traders who are suffering now from the recession would certainly suffer less. In the Zetland Road end, we have already lost Cameron

Carpets, the Fire Place shop and the Bicycle shop to name a few in recent months. There was a mention on the radio that one in five shops on our high streets will close soon. Let's not allow this to happen in our area.

Near the Gloucester Road there needs to be greater flexibility built into the scheme so that employees of businesses can park within the suggested times above. It is no good saying, for example, that a business can have two parking permits when places like bakeries have more than two staff and start at something like 5 am (when buses aren't running) and obviously don't finish work by 9 am. We can't have any more businesses going to the wall because of an inflexible ideal.

I know that residents from the roads round Bristol Prison have cause for complaint - perhaps the prison service could run some sort of park and ride scheme (at a cost to income tax payers!) Two permits would hardly be enough for the staff there!

Whilst examining these schemes, it would be a good idea to look at the timings of the 'showcase' bus route. Unrestricted parking on the route going out of town in the morning and on the route going into town in the evening would be of considerable benefit to traders, some of whom don't feel it is worth opening after 4.30 pm or before 9.30 am. During these restricted hours the traffic wardens are at present, out and about; but where do they go for the rest of the day when chaos prevails at times on the Gloucester Road, with buses and cars unable to move. Does the council employ only part time traffic wardens?

It should remain free to park on the Gloucester Road and elsewhere in the residents' parking zone area. Let us not drive people to Cribbs Causeway and other out of town shopping areas where there is free parking, causing the demise of the Gloucester Road and Bedminster shopping areas.



The bus service in Bristol is nothing like as good as, for example, in Edinburgh and is certainly far more expensive. There you must pay the exact money for your journey (or you don't get change) and it is a flat rate which makes the fare paying process much quicker. The flat rate was £1.50 recently with a day rider costing £3.50. Because of the Bristol prices people don't use the buses to the same extent here. Residents' parking zones should not be brought in until the bus services are more frequent, flat rate fares comparable with Edinburgh are adopted and a more widespread service is developed; for example, there is no bus going from Gloucester Road to Temple Meads or to Whiteladies Road or the Zoo area.

I know that the Mayor is set on Residents' Parking but instead of the imposition of so many individual areas, let us have a simple system, only implemented when the bus fares and bus services are improved. The number of cars parked on the Downs shows how poor the existing bus services are from the suburbs to the centre - people park there and then catch the buses from Blackboy Hill.

## Residents' Parking Schemes

We felt that this edition of the Bishopston Society newsletter would be incomplete without a comment on the proposed Residents Parking Schemes (RPS's) for the Redland and Bishopston area.

It was clear from the mayor's address at the neighbourhood Super Forum on May 11th (see article "Our Neighbourhood Week"), that the Mayor feels that air pollution in Bristol is a major problem which has to be tackled, for the sake of future generations of children. The culprit is the car, especially the increase of diesel-powered vehicles over the past few years, so his vision is for a city which is cleaner and where walking, cycling and public transport are the preferred modes of getting about. Part of the solution, he feels, is Residents' Parking Schemes aimed at discouraging commuter traffic, and as far as he is concerned, the negotiation with local residents is not over the concept of RPS's themselves, but how they are implemented.

The Bishopston Society committee would endorse the Mayor's view of the future of the City, and a vision of our streets being safe for children and adults alike. However we are aware that Bishopston is a mix of narrow

and broader streets, and possibly far enough out of town not to be a target area for many commuters. Maintaining a thriving Gloucester Road is also a priority for our members, and we are aware that many traders see parking schemes as directly threatening to their businesses.

What the Bishopston Society would like to see is:

- Not a "one-size-fits-all" policy, but where proper consultation with local residents and businesses is about what will bring benefits to our area and yet reduce overall car use
- Evidence of how people travel to the Gloucester Road and what they do there (their weekly shop, using a cafe, using a niche shop or facility); looking at numbers of people who live locally and walk, those who are passing through by car or bus, and those who travel specifically to Gloucester Road from other parts of Bristol where there is no direct bus connection
- Evidence of what has worked in other parts of Bristol or other towns and an analysis of the relevance of these examples to Bishopston
- Evidence of the impact of the Showcase bus lanes implemented several years ago and lessons to be learned.

Better public transport should also be part of the answer, so we welcome the pressure on First Bus to review their fares, but unless the mayor has the same powers over the bus companies as the Mayor of London, we appreciate that radical changes in fares and services are unlikely.

However we know that the councillors for both Bishopston and Redland wards are very keen to ensure that the RPS's meet the needs of local residents. The Society is committed to work with both the Councillors and the Neighbourhood Partnership to ensure that consultation and negotiation will be conducted where the relevant facts are available and the voices of all parts of our community are heard.

We ask that members email our website with their concerns and positive suggestions so we can better gauge the range of views. You may wish to also copy in your local councillor as well.



**The Bishopston Society Committee**

## **NEWS FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP JUNE 2013**

The work of the Partnership continues to be extensive and relevant to residents of Bishopston. Read further to find out more about the Gloucester Road, trees, parks, and residents parking schemes, and the Wellbeing Fund.

The Promenade on the Gloucester Road will see improvements this autumn. Changes will include some new street trees, removal of loading bays to be replaced with short term parking bays, and revised bus stop arrangements. The public will be consulted as part of the normal processes for traffic regulation orders. Bin storage on the pavement has been a longstanding issue for local people: this will be dealt with through the multidisciplinary Partnership Street Scene group. Councillor Fi Hance is part of that group so can be contacted with issues pertaining to the Promenade.

What will be of significance to the Gloucester Rd in future years is the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on all planning permissions on new development. The Neighbourhood Partnership will receive 15% of any levy charged within the Partnership area, and it can spend it on any of the three wards to a) add to or improve infrastructure or b) anything else concerned with addressing the demands of that development. The Sainsbury development on the Memorial ground will generate a very large levy, which for the Partnership will mean thousands of pounds to be spent on parks, community buildings, library improvements, transport schemes and enhancements to the Gloucester Rd itself.

The Residents Parking Scheme (RPS) issue is of great concern to both the traders on the Gloucester Road and residents, and was a source of heated exchanges with the Mayor at the 'Super Forum' on May 7th at the Horfield Baptist Church. Everyone is anxiously watching the Cotham and North Redland scheme which is to be rolled out by the beginning of 2014. At the Partnership meeting on March 25th there was agreement that a 'one size fits all' approach could not be applied for RPS's and that it was crucial that a thorough review be conducted 6 months after implementation. In addition it stressed the importance of taking a pragmatic approach to ensure that businesses and people employed in the area were not

disadvantaged by the RPSs, Your Councillors are the right people to contact with your views, or try directly online at:

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/transport-and-streets/residents%E2%80%99-parking-schemes> for more details.

The way to protect our shopping streets is to make them attractive places to work in and to visit. To give the Gloucester Road a boost, the Partnership allocated £2000 toward hanging baskets for the Gloucester Road this summer. To this sum was added a contribution from the Gloucester Road traders, collecting boxes placed in local shops, the Bishopston Society and £800 from the Open Gardens event in Bishopston on May 19th. Thanks to donations from many parts of our community, there will be at least 40 hanging baskets on 20 lamp posts between The Promenade and the Ashley Down Road junction this summer.



Each year the Partnership has to choose one of our park areas to put forward a tree plan for funding from the Council - this year it has chosen Redland Green. In addition there will be three street trees planted in the Redland/Cotham area this year, and a further three along Gloucester Road and Muller Road - a final decision on sites will await the new Tree Officer starting work in the Council.

For those of you who live in north Bishopston you may have noticed on Thursday afternoons an outdoor play scheme operating on Horfield Common for 8-13 year olds. This is the only supervised outdoor play scheme in our area for this age group, and has been funded by the Partnership for one year. From 2014, if it is successful, Friends of Horfield Commons, local schools and other local organisation will need to put together a funding plan to keep it going. The Council has £100,000 to

upgrade the play equipment on Horfield Common - long overdue. Whether to re-site the play area was a major debate at the Partnership meeting on March 25th; the outcome was for the Council to continue further discussion with local residents and Friends of Horfield Common and to report back to a later meeting of the Partnership.

At the January 21st Partnership meeting, just under £30,000 from the Wellbeing fund was allocated to various groups across the Partnership area. Full details are on the Bishopston Society website, but the ones which benefited (full or part funding) in the Bishopston area are

- Dipping pond platforms for the Golden Hill Community Garden
- Support for an educational "home orchard" project at Hopfield Organic Community Orchard
- Set up costs for Sefton Park football club
- Pied Piper play group
- Public outdoor film event in St Andrews park this summer
- Public outdoor performance and drama event in St Andrews Park this summer
- Musical instruments and the gardening club at Ashley Down Infant and Junior Schools
- Preparation costs for the new scout hut for 63rd Bristol scouts Sefton Park
- Activities at "Extra Time", the club for people with dementia based at the Rovers Football Club
- Collection boxes for the Gloucester Road traders for the hanging baskets
- Three street trees.

At the meeting on 25th March, a further £1460 was granted to provide a graffiti removal training course. The course was held in May and attended by some residents from the Bishopston area. It is due to dedicated volunteers like these that "tagging" and flyposting has slowly but steadily been removed from our area.

The next and final deadline for the Wellbeing fund for 2013/14 is October 1st 2013. Think ahead to projects you might want to do in 2014/15 as final decisions will not be made until January 2014. Please tell any organisation you know of which might benefit from a small grant to get their applications in on time.

Clive Stevens who came to speak to the Bishopston Society in September 2012 on trees has been the Chair of the Partnership. After four years he has decided to stand down and commit his voluntary time to other activities. Having a local resident as Chair has been a huge advantage for the Partnership as the relationship with Council staff can be on a different basis to that of an elected councillor. Clive will be sadly missed but a new Chair, to be elected at the June Partnership meeting, will offer something equally positive but different. After all, local democratic organisations should be dynamic and changing - a new Chair and now one of the six councillors from the Green Party - will bring in a new era for the Partnership.

**Jenny Hoadley**

**Partnership rep for the Bishopston Society**

## **DATES OF THE PUBLIC FORUMS**

### **September 2013-December 2013**

These are public meetings open to all local residents. Check the website: [www.bristolpartnership.org/neighbourhoodpartnerships/bishopston-cotham-redland](http://www.bristolpartnership.org/neighbourhoodpartnerships/bishopston-cotham-redland). Check the website for the venue.

Tuesday September 10th at 7pm	Bishopston
Thursday September 5th at 7pm	Cotham
Thursday September 12th at 7pm	Redland
Tuesday December 10th at 7pm	Bishopston
Thursday December 5th	Cotham
Tuesday December 3rd	Redland

## **DATES FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS 2013**

These are public meetings open to all local residents at 7pm. If possible have a look at the agenda and reports beforehand on the Council website (see above for the web address) and check the venue.

Monday June 24th 2013 at 7pm

Monday 14th October 2013 at 7pm

Monday January 20th 2014 at 7pm

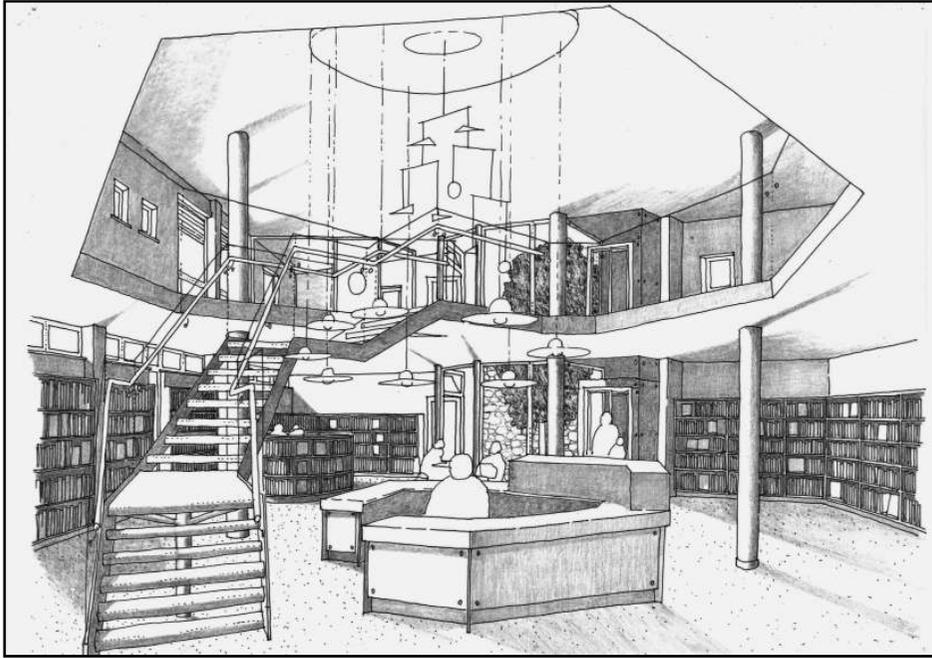
**Jenny Hoadley**

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## **Bishopston Health Centre and Library**

Behind the smart blue hoardings on the Gloucester Road, work is proceeding apace on the conversion of the Bristol North Baths into a health centre and the construction of the new Bishopston Library. These two projects mark the start of a three site contract, between Bristol City Council and developers Chatsworth Homes, the final phase of which sees the demolition of the Cheltenham Road Library to allow the construction of 36 apartments.

Work is well underway in the Baths, and the new first floor, at the level of the old gallery is already in place. It will house the combined Spence and the Nevil Road doctors' surgeries. This upper level will be open right up to the roof and flooded with daylight from the skylight which runs the full length of the building. The new floor will have large glazed panels letting light down into the community health facilities on the ground floor below, particularly onto the hydrotherapy pool, which has been created within the shallow end of the old swimming pool. A new lift has been planned to fit within one of the old stair towers and the wrought iron balustrade of the main staircase has been carefully restored. The new facilities will include a pharmacy in the entrance area as well as a minor



An impression of the new library by Neil Embleton

procedures suite in what used to be the changing and boiler rooms at the rear of the building. As the North Baths is a Grade 2 Listed building, permission had to be sought to form discreet new window openings to let light into the ground floor in particular, which in its time as a swimming pool, was a dark brick box. Every attempt is being made to maintain and enhance the character of what has long been a cherished building in the community, with many fond memories for local residents of time spent as children and adults at swimming lessons and galas.

Following not far behind, foundations have been poured for the new library and construction work is getting into gear. The library building also includes a new public toilet facility, and has 10 apartments above it which are now being marketed and enjoying a strong response. Although sited on the old car park area, the design has retained 17 of the 23 original parking spaces within an attractive courtyard, between the two buildings, which could be the venue for community activities such as a farmers' market. The new library building is on two floors and extends right back to the old stone wall at the rear of the site. The brief from Bristol Library Services

was for maximum openness onto the street; so the design incorporates a huge two storey window down to pavement level as well as cut-outs in the first floor to allow almost uninterrupted visibility into both levels.

On the ground floor we find the main reception desk, lending library and public access computers. There is also a children's library which is situated around a small planted courtyard at the rear. There is a meeting room adjacent to the entrance, which can be used out of hours when the library is closed. A curved staircase leads to the upper level where there is an area for laptop users plus a reading area. At a time when so many libraries are being closed across the country, we must count ourselves as extremely fortunate to be awaiting this brand new facility.

**Neil Embleton**



New ground floor windows installed for Health Centre

### **Subscription Reminder**

**Subscriptions for 2013/14 are due on the 1st of July 2013. If you have not already paid, please forward your remittance to the Treasurer using the form on the back cover of this Newsletter.**

## "Our Neighbourhood Week" 2013

Between May 4th to the 11th, local voluntary groups showcased their activities in Bishopston, Cotham and Redland, inviting people to get involved or just become more aware of the richness of local networks of activity around them. It was organised by the Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Neighbourhood Partnership to foster neighbourhood awareness and also promote the Neighbourhood Partnership itself and its potential as a force for local beneficial change, a view promoted by the Mayor.

It started with the Whiteladies Farmers Market and Fair Trading Fair, and throughout the week, there were guided walks in the local parks, an information Neighbourhood Partnership Library drop-in in the two local libraries, local bands in a pub on the Gloucester Road (a fundraising gig for Ashley Down Schools), activities for children, music taster sessions and much more. The culmination was a 'Super Public Forum' for everyone on the Saturday at Horfield Baptist Church on the Gloucester Rd. Shoppers were serenaded by the Redland Green Community Chorus on The Prom and at the Horfield Baptist Church. The police were parked up outside the old Co-op, to offer advice on crime reduction and to be on hand to discuss concerns about public safety, and in the Church Halls there were stalls including the Bishopston Society, Neighbourhood Watch, The Bristol Cotham and Redland Street Scene Group, Friends of Redland Green and others.

The Super Forum itself was attended by over 200 people. The Mayor came to speak about his vision for a better Bristol for future generations, and his support for local democracy and small independent businesses. Many of the questions from the floor, as you may expect, were about the proposed residents' parking schemes (see article in this newsletter) but also he was reminded that there have been one or two examples of his views not necessarily being carried through in the policies implemented by Council staff - which is confusing for the public. Participants then broke into small groups to discuss the issues they wished the Partnership to adopt as their priorities for the next couple of years: the one on Residents' parking schemes was a positive consideration of how to make a scheme work for local people. Finally the session "The Challenge facing our High streets" provided some background and statistics on the change in our shopping habits, and what the Gloucester Road and Cotham Hill/Whiteladies Road businesses were hoping to do to meet the challenge. The emphasis will be on customer care, reliability, and making

shopping an experience which addresses our retail and social needs. The Cotham Hill and Whiteladies Road areas already have a part time paid consultant paid for by the Partnership for 12 months to assist with this, and the Gloucester Road traders have submitted an application to the Partnership for a similar post.

The Neighbourhood Partnership will be reporting back on its review of its priorities after examining the feedback from the 'Super Forum'. Many hours of volunteers' and Council staff time went into making the Festival happen, and the Partnership hopes that local people are now more aware of the many positive activities in their local areas and of the work which the Neighbourhood Partnership does in conjunction with voluntary groups, local businesses and the Council.

**Jenny Hoadley**

**Neighbourhood Partnership rep for the Bishopston Society**

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## The trees of St Andrews Park

A first time visitor to St Andrews Park will almost certainly be impressed with the number, size and variety of its trees. While it is a relatively small park, it is well endowed with trees thanks to its Victorian creators. A recent count gives a figure of around 190 trees comprised of 40 or so species, most being now mature specimens dating from the original plantings when the park was opened in 1894.

Two species in particular help to give the park its unique character, the first being the Austrian Pines (*Pinus nigra nigra*). There are 33 of these, located for the most part around the periphery of the park, and probably placed there to help act as windbreaks, this being the most common reason for the use of this particular tree in parks and large gardens. These produce copious numbers of cones, the seeds of which form a significant item in the diet of the resident grey squirrels. One of these pines, still surviving, had its top lopped off when a Lancaster bomber crash landed in the park in the Second World War. More about this incident can be found on one of the information boards near the top end of the park.



Bird Cherries in flower in St Andrews Park

Two of the Austrian Pines have recently been felled because they represented a potential hazard. In line with a policy of trying to include more native species, these two trees have been replaced with Scots Pine.

The other tree that contributes significantly to the park's identity is the Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*), of which there are 27 individuals. The species is native to England and Wales. The Limes are mainly concentrated along the major path traversing the park from north (the corner of Melita Road and Sommerville Road) to south (the corner of Maurice Road and Leopold Road). Their pollarded trunks give rise to sweeping arches of branches forming, in summer, a green canopied avenue that cuts diagonally across the park. The flowers of these Limes are particularly attractive to bees, and in late June, if standing under one of these trees, you can hear a distinct buzzing from numbers of insects visiting the flowers in search of nectar.

The 15 London Plane trees (*Platanus x acerifolia*) though not so numerous, are by their sheer size, an immediately noticeable species and are also instrumental in helping create the overall character of the park. They are easily recognised by the mottled appearance of their trunks, a feature

produced by the annual flaking off of plates of bark, that leaves behind a subtle patchwork in shades of green and brown. The seeds which form from the globular flower heads in autumn hang as clusters of dangling balls. Parties of goldfinches are particularly partial to these seeds and can be regularly seen feeding on them during the winter months.

The most prolifically-flowering trees are, arguably the six Bird Cherries (*Prunus pardus WATERERI*) which produce dense masses of long flower spikes, each covered in highly scented white flowers. On a calm, warm day in late April and early May, their attractive heady perfume pervades the park air.

There are three specimens of Maidenhair (*Ginkgo biloba*), a tree that was referred to as a living fossil by Charles Darwin as it is the only existing species of a group of primitive trees that originated, and was dominant in the Jurassic Era, 200 million years ago. Fossils of the Jurassic trees are virtually identical to the present day trees. Maidenhair trees are uncommon outside southern England and are most frequently found planted around London and the Bristol-Bath-Yeovil area.

About two years ago, a TBS member chose to have an uncommon species planted as a memorial tree. This Katsura (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*) has particularly attractive foliage when its leaves open in spring and again when they develop their autumn colours. It is a native of China and Japan and in the right conditions, can grow into a very large specimen reaching up to 45 metres high. Like the Maidenhair, it is a very primitive tree, closely related to magnolias; the family to which it belongs may even, in evolutionary terms, predate the Ginkgo.

Lastly, a very unusual tree was planted in the park this year, a Bristol Whitebeam (*Sorbus bristoliensis*). It is a species endemic to Bristol, being found in the wild only in the Avon Gorge. There are about 300 individuals growing there. The St Andrews Park specimen is therefore a very rare tree and probably one of only an extremely small number to exist outside of the Gorge.

If you want to find out more about the St Andrews Park trees, there are lots of photos and more information about the trees described here and the park's other tree species at:

<http://friendsofstandrewspark.ning.com/page/trees-1>

**Simon Randolph**

## Judith Wainwright

We are sorry to have to let you all know that Judith died on 22nd April, aged eighty. Judith was a great supporter of the Bishopston Society and was on the committee for several years - until her illness made it impossible for her to carry on.

Judith had been a senior social worker in London, and, on her retirement to Bristol in 1990, took an active interest in local affairs. (She had lived on Berkeley Rd for about twenty years). She was particularly interested in working with refugees and the One World movement - and loved her Bishopston garden. She was a quiet and thoughtful person who believed in the importance of communities, both local and global.

Her funeral took place at Canford last month and was well supported with family, friends and people from all aspects of her life attending.

## Our new web site is coming soon...



The Bishopston Society web site is having a make-over! The new version of the site, to be revealed soon, features:-

- A new clean, colourful, design
- An improved structure and easier navigation
- The same informative content + new sections
- More photos and other improvements
- Better software to support further improvements

Stay tuned to [www.bishopstonsociety.org.uk](http://www.bishopstonsociety.org.uk) – the new version will be showing on your web browser soon!



## The Bishopston Society Annual General Meeting

A date for your diary: AGM, Monday 30th September at St Michaels Church Hall starting at 7.30 pm.

The speaker at the AGM will be Mark Allen for the Spence Practice who will update us about progress on the conversion of the Bristol North Baths to a Health Centre. A representative from Transport Services at Bristol City Council will talk to us about the pleasure, usefulness and convenience of the Gloucester Road for its local users. This is an open meeting to which all are welcome.



Road in Bishopston

## Help Bishopston have the voice it deserves by becoming a member!

As a member you would receive two newsletters a year and be consulted on local issues. We hold two public meetings a year with plenty of topical discussion. Depending on your interests, you are also welcome to join the committee or become involved with its work and activities.

Name	_____
Address (please print)	_____
Telephone	_____
(Evenings & Week-ends)	
E-Mail (please print)	_____
Signature:	_____

Subscriptions - cheques should be made payable to The Bishopston Society - £7 per annum for individuals or £10 per annum for two adults living at the same address. Please return this form with fee to:

Richard Farrow,  
Garden Flat, 85 Hampton Park,  
Redland,  
Bristol.  
BS6 6LQ

or hand in at the meeting in a sealed envelope  
- if you require a receipt, please request.

NB Your details will be held on a database for contact purposes.

If you have new neighbours, perhaps you could let them know about  
The Bishopston Society.

Extra copies of the booklet can be obtained from Lionel White (0117 9445687)