

Friends of the  
**BARNHILL ROCK GARDEN**

**Autumn Newsletter 2021**

## ***From the Editor***

Once again, we are trying to bring you up to date with what has been happening with the Friends since our somewhat shortened, Spring newsletter. We were permitted to go back to work, with restrictions, in the middle of May, so there was a lot of weeding to be done i.e. concentrating on the basics! Everyone seemed glad to get back in action. Since then, the restrictions have very gradually eased, but the activities we organise are still far from normal. Read about the all things we have been doing to help bring the Garden back on its feet.

***Anne Hesketh***

## **Nature in the Garden**

During the last 18 months, the Rock Garden has been under some form of lockdown, resulting in the cancellation of many of the children's events associated with the Garden. We tried, during this time, to formulate some new ideas and educational tools for when the children would finally return.

In the Garden we have now erected two sign boards for this purpose. One is at the pond and depicts 'A year in the life a Pond', moving through each month and explaining what can be seen at each particular time. This can be viewed by all and it allows any visitors to enhance their knowledge of what exactly is happening at any given time. Recent feedback has shown that adults also find it interesting. The second one is in the woodland area of the Rock Garden, near to the recently re built 'Bug Inn' (which was destroyed by fire). It shows posters of 'Creepy Crawlies'. This encourages children and even adults to identify what is going on.

Now that the lockdown is over, it is noticeable that many more children have found these signs and have taken great interest in the content of them. This is what we were hoping to achieve; to stimulate them to look at flora and fauna in a different light.

We hope as the months progress, more school holidays loom and restrictions slowly ease, we will do some specialised talks using these sign boards as educational tools.

***Ann Taylor***





## From the Chairman

The Committee decided earlier this year that we needed to have a drive for new members. We were further inspired to do this by the vast number of people who used the Garden during lockdown, many of whom kept telling us how much they appreciated the asset. Arising from this, the committee delivered an unsolicited mail shot with our membership leaflet to some of the streets in Broughty Ferry. This membership drive was very successful and we now number 569. I feel, with this number, we have become a significant group in the community. By the time you read this newsletter, all new members will have been invited down to the garden for a look round and refreshments.

The Committee has also been looking at a number of alternative ideas for improving the area around the 'New Buckie'. We propose to build an attractive new retaining wall and steps to the south side of the re-laid patio. These ideas have been discussed with Michael and members of Council staff and we are now obtaining estimates for the work, which we sincerely hope can be started fairly soon. After building work is completed, we will carry out suitable planting schemes to complement the whole area.

I hope, sincerely, that the many frustrations caused by the pandemic are behind us and that we can look forward to a successful AGM, our winter talks, next year's Welsh summer holiday and the summer outings. All were cancelled last year.

**John Grocott**



## From the Gardening Team

The Friends Monday Team has benefited from several new recruits. We now regularly have more than 10 members who have been badly needed each week. As well as the post Covid intensive weeding required in our areas, there was another battle to fight. This was to reclaim the "Girls' Bed" (next to the Buckie), as this had become part of Gilmartin's working area. Some plants had been removed and stored in anticipation of this work. So with perseverance, the use of original and fresh plants, the area was finally replanted in Spring.

The plant sales table, with its honesty box, was restocked in late Spring and has been available at the Geddes glasshouse for most of the summer. The gate is normally open Monday to Friday during working hours. Now that we and Michael have been back at the Garden after the Covid lay off, the Garden is looking so much more under control, which is very pleasing.

Looking forward, the team, along with Michael, is drawing up a list of jobs for the coming Autumn and Winter. Hopefully we can all enjoy our coffee/tea break at 11 o'clock on the re-laid patio in the sun! It's amazing how frequently we enjoy our break outside, even in the winter months.

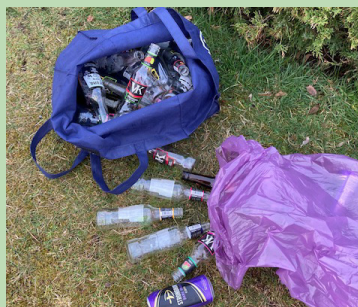
**John Grocott**



## Lockdown vandalism

*With the dramatic increase of visitors to the Garden during lockdown we were disappointed, but not totally surprised, at the increase in litter. Ann and Liz Taylor (no relation) went out every Monday for a very early morning walk and exercise. This is what they found.*

**Editor**



Some litter on a Monday morning is to be expected, but this year we have been cursed with an exorbitant amount of evidence of antisocial behaviour. This includes a multitude of empty bottles, the burning down of the children's bug hotel, the pond sign broken and more. I am very pleased to say the bug hotel and the pond sign have been reconstructed for the children. The most alarming part, however, was the burning of garden furniture on the high ground and other fires set around the bases of some fir trees. We, along with the local residents, and with help from the community police, are keeping an eye on events. I am pleased to say the problem appears to be diminishing with this increased attention.

**Ann Taylor**







## The Giants are back

Since the first report in our 2017 newsletter, John has been continuing to bring on cardiocrinum seeds for display in the Garden. It takes five to six years for bulbs to get large enough to flower and then they die. This year he successfully planted out a group of his giants (up to 7 ft tall) for all to see. They were next to the new Buckie and we hope you didn't miss them. Although the plants have now finished flowering, the ripening seed pods are expanding rapidly and John is looking forward to "collecting hundreds and hundreds more seeds in October and November". So if you want to give them a go, you know where to ask!

*Anne Hesketh*

## From the Gardener

The return of the Friends group, volunteers and the Gator (electric garden vehicle) was a welcome sight indeed!!! Everyone has worked tremendously hard to get the Garden back on its feet again and almost to its former glory.

When I returned in April a massive push was needed if we were to return the Garden to normal. Between the pandemic and building work, it was all up in the air. However, as always, everyone worked together as a team to achieve the best for the Garden. The Council also sent an apprentice called Ross to assist me. This has been a big help.

Firstly I set about returning the buildings back to normal and ready for use by staff and Friends. Then we steadily began to maintain and bring back from the wild all borders and areas throughout the entire garden. There was a huge amount to be done as the majority of areas had not been touched since December 2019. A priority was to restore them to a high level for our visitors to enjoy and to continue to achieve our various awards.

As I write this report, we are busy preparing for one of our inspections and I am delighted to say the Garden is almost back to its previous splendour with only certain areas to the West still requiring maintenance. I am now starting to plan Autumn/Winter jobs, including the planting up of any gaps in the borders to enhance existing planting schemes throughout. We are trying to restart the water features again, but they require modernisation in order to restore them. They are major asset that our visitors enjoy.

Hopefully events, children workshops and concerts can return next year to give a real sense of normality again (fingers crossed). It has been a real pleasure to be back working in the Garden with the Friends group and the sponsored volunteers.

*Michael Laird*



**When planting in summer, remember to soak your root ball thoroughly.**

**Before planting, make the planting hole bigger than the root ball and soak it until water is absorbed into the soil.**

**This will help the roots tap into any moisture and soil nutrients.**

**Remember to monitor the plant and water regularly.**

*Michael Laird*

**Michael's gardening tip**





## The Ancient Gardener (with apologies to Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

There in the Rock Garden  
as young plants grow,  
responding to the summer's warmth,  
reaching upward to their flowering  
peak,

I bend, as many times before,  
in this and other gardens,  
over forty years of nurturing  
in a meeting of me and nature.

I bend to collect a watering can,

but before I even reach the handle  
an eruption of volcanic pain  
surges, lava-like, across my back  
and grips me in Pompeian agony.

I edge forward, my riven back  
constrained by belts of steel  
poured from a furnace  
and stretched to immobilise.

There in the summer garden  
friends bend to elysian weeding,  
sharing knowledge of plants  
and meeting nature with therapeutic  
calm.

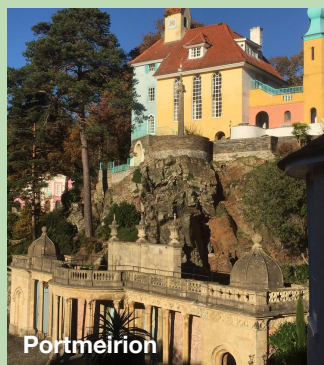
Like Methuselah with a zimmer frame  
I edge forward again, step by step  
conjuring up explanations  
for inquisitive passers-by.

Reaching home, a tentative stretch  
picks up the paracetamol, and  
with sudden, desperate gasps  
I phone for sympathy and help.

Further spasms pulsate and surge  
making my mouth a vent of pain,  
the obverse of elysian tranquillity,  
nature bending me within its grip.

French windows look upon the lawn  
where, in the warmth of summer,  
daisy and clover, dandelion and  
hawkweed,  
stretch joyously, free from my intrusion,  
in a burgeoning meadow.

**Godfrey Nicholson**



Portmeirion



Caerau garden



Bodnant  
laburnum arch

## Wales trip

We are hoping to run the twice postponed trip to 'The Gardens of North Wales' next May. Glenton are dealing with this year's holidays at present, but I shall be contacting them later to firm up details. Some people have indicated that they no longer wish to go, which means there are spare places. If you are interested in joining the group for this trip, or for information about the places we hope to visit, please contact me.

**Kate Grocott**

## Winter meetings

All the speakers have confirmed the rescheduled programme below. The meetings, however, may again be affected by changing restrictions for indoor meetings and speaker personal concerns. We will notify the membership of any late changes through email. You can also check by phoning a member of the committee nearer the time.

### 22nd September 2021

AGM with reports from Michael Laird and John Grocott

### 27th October 2021

Subject: "Over The Garden Wall"

Speaker: Sally Lorimore.

### 24th November 2021

Subject: Taymara, Tay River Trips.

Speaker: Bob Black.

### 23rd February 2022

Subject: Murton Trust For Education and the Environment

Speaker: Alison Elliot.

### 23rd March 2022

Subject: History of Broughty Ferry and Surrounding Areas.

Speaker: Charlie Webster.

All meetings to be held at Broughty Ferry Baptist Church,  
86 St Vincent Street, Broughty Ferry, at 7.30pm (see above).

## Need to contact us?

**Chairman:**  
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