



Friends of the
BARNHILL ROCK GARDEN

Autumn Newsletter 2022

From the Editor

I find it difficult to believe we are compiling this Autumn newsletter already. The summer seems to have flown by. Is it perhaps because of age that time now passes so quickly, or is it perhaps a by-product of the pandemic and life slowly returning to normal? Who knows? In the Garden the last of the pandemic restrictions, required by the Council, were lifted in May. These were about restrictions on numbers in the nursery area, the Geddes and groups visiting the Garden. Despite this, we had been able to work elsewhere, more or less as before. Of course, initial work in the Spring was very much dominated by the need for weeding as things got back to nearly normal and the focus could move away from work arising as a result of the storm. Now our wider activities are in full force and, hopefully, this newsletter will bring you up to date.

Anne Hesketh

Wales at last

Early on a wet Monday morning in May, a coach departed Broughty, Ferry taking a group of Friends on a long-awaited trip to North Wales. The journey to our base in Llandudno was a lengthy one, but a break at Dalemain Garden in Cumbria was most welcome. The garden is small but the varied planting provided interest round every corner.

On the second day, two gardens were visited. First, the huge Bodnant Garden where there was much to see, particularly the glorious rhododendrons and azaleas on many walks and a wild flower meadow introduced into an old park area. The sound of chainsaws permeated the air, a reminder of the many trees felled by storm Arwen. Second, was Caerau Gardens, created over the last 30 years by a couple with a garden design background; the views over the surrounding countryside were glorious.

Day three brought a visit to Powis Castle and Gardens, where four impressive terraces cascade down



Bodnant Garden



Powis Castle and Gardens



from the south front of the castle. In its later phases the castle had everything for essential living; an ice-house, an external plunge pool and a croquet lawn, all still visible. After a scenic drive through Snowdonia National Park, the visit on day four was to Portmeirion, a quirky fake Italianate village and gardens created by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis between 1935 and 1975; the natural situation overlooking the estuary of the River Dwyryd is stunning.

Llandudno proved to be a delightful base, not that there was much time to explore, but some people managed to walk up the Great Orme and others went to a male voice choir concert. All too soon, however, it was day five and time for the journey home, with a

break at Acorn Bank, near Temple Sowerby, with its herb garden, orchard, watermill and former gypsum mines.

The gardens visited whether National Trust or privately run were beautiful and a joy to see (mostly in sunshine), but were challenged by their lack of resources, both human and financial. All were so pleased, therefore, to be welcoming back visitors and our group of Friends was delighted to play a part in that.

Lis Thoms



Portmeirion

From the Chairman

More than a dozen trees, blown over by Storm Arwen last November, have been gradually cleared away by the City Council Forestry Section, but there are still a few stumps and root balls to be dealt with. The Council's priority, quite rightly, was public safety and they have had a huge amount of storm damage with which to deal. The Friends have suggested that one tall tree stump be used as some sort of carved feature and this may well become a memento of the storm. After all the tribulations of lock down and violent storms, I am pleased to say we do seem to be getting our areas of the garden back under control.



At the time of writing, two of our three summer trips have taken place, with a good number on each trip enjoying the outing. The final trip is to Crathes Castle and Garden, which I hope will also be blessed with good weather.

As you will, have gathered from the front page article, our much delayed 5 day trip to some gardens in North Wales finally took place in May. During the two year pandemic, some people/bookings were cancelled, but others signed up after our newsletter last Autumn. In the end we were delighted that 34 people joined the group. Our base at Llandudno was good.

I cannot report any actual progress on the 'Wall and Steps Project'. However, the committee has decided to reduce the scale of the work by repairing the steps and retaining and erecting a handrail to one side of the steps. When this building work has been done, we will create two new planted areas, one above and one below the retaining wall.

You will notice it mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter that we are holding our A.G.M. and winter talks in the afternoon for a trial period. I look forward to seeing a good number of you at the A.G.M. on 28th September at 2.00pm.

John Grocott

Oops! Forestry has just cut down the stump. A good idea has 'hit the dirt'!



From the Gardener

We have been steadily getting on top of the borders since Spring, ensuring that they are maintained to a high standard. We have been filling up gaps with new plants, which have been grown in our own small glasshouse in the Nursery. We have also been battling against the recent, dry conditions. If this is going to be an ongoing trend with the climate, as it is a South facing site with sandy soil, we are going to have to think about adding more drought tolerant planting. This year I will have to cut back all herbaceous plants after the Broughty in Bloom inspection, as they have weathered due to the prolonged dry spell.

The water features are still switched off, but I am hoping to see them up and running soon. However, we have been keeping the main ponds topped up with water to protect the pond and plant life. Recently it almost feels it's back to normal. It has been reassuring to see Events and Inspections in the Garden once again. In addition, the Forestry Department has almost cleared away all the damage and debris caused by the winter storms.

The Friends planted up the border behind the new Buckie and it looks super. I am looking forward to working with them in redesigning the link border between the Geddes Glasshouse and the Patio.

Once again thank you for your continued support throughout the year in keeping the Garden as a popular green space.

Michael Laird



From the Gardening Team

Our team of volunteers on Monday continues to increase. We now regularly get 12 or more people sharing the jobs and enjoying a tea/coffee break at 11.00. For one or two recent Mondays we even had to work and take our break in the shade!

In addition to maintaining our areas, we have been spending a good deal of time cultivating the planting area between the 'new Buckie' and the Geddes Glasshouse. We aim to replant this area with suitable plants in the coming winter.

A programme of jobs for the autumn and winter is now being worked out. This year's long spell of dry weather has made us realise that we have to be more aware of climate change when choosing plants for planting in the borders of the Rock Garden.

John Grocott

SUMMER OUTINGS 2022

The committee was pleased at the enthusiastic response of members wanting to go on the trips after the pandemic hiatus. There is still one to go in August.



June: Saughton Park, Edinburgh

A coachload of 33 eager folk set off on our first outing of 2022 after a l-o-n-g wait of over 2 years. Our destination, Saughton Park, opened to the public in 2018 after restoration following years of changes of ownership, use, abandonment and latterly neglect. The earliest record of this 34 acre estate goes back to the 12th Century.

A young, enthusiastic 'Friend' gave us a comprehensive and detailed account of its history up

to the present day. It is extensive: specimen trees, rose gardens, greenhouse, exotic plants, wide, colourful herbaceous borders, iconic bandstand, listed sundial statuary, wide walkways and a 'physic' garden cultivated for the use of the former asylum. Some remedies would now be considered dubious!

A snack lunch was enjoyed 'on the hoof' from the Bistro cafe/coffee shop causing consternation to the

staff, as most of us descended on it en masse. The inevitable wait was, however, whiled away with fun, banter and humour. The surrounding area here is the Bothy, the base of the Royal Caledonian Horticulture Society for teaching and R&D.

This most enjoyable trip was certainly appreciated after our enforced non-socialising for such a time. Thank you organisers!

Jane Peggie

It was the kind of day when you wondered if you should take a raincoat! We set off in sunshine, then drove through rain to the Crieff Garden Centre, our stop for lunch. As our bus drew up, we were dismayed to see another party pull in at the same time. There was a rush through the rain to get to the head of the café queue. Unfortunately, we were still short of time. Wise people had brought packed lunches or settled for a plate of soup; some were seen dashing for the bus clutching a half-eaten panini as they boarded for Braco Castle.

Our fearless bus driver then fought his way up the long drive under low tree branches, only to discover later that there was a far easier route for buses.

These little annoyances were soon forgotten once we arrived outside the impressive castle. Greeted by our host Mr M van Ballegooijen, who had taken on the garden in 1993, we were handed a leaflet and map. We were left to wander over the gardens, following grass paths to various 'rooms' filled with herbaceous plants, terraced alongside an ornamental pond.

Many unusual plants were noted, including a dainty flowered Japanese anemone. It wasn't obvious, until stumbling upon the ruined glass house and gate, that this part had been a walled garden; so dense was the planting. On the other side of the castle, there had been a bowling green and tennis court, now repurposed into beautiful wildflower meadows, using old quarry spoil to degrade the soil. In the end, we forgot to ask our host whether he had other help apart from his wife. It didn't rain while we there; in fact the sun came out again! *Liz Taylor*



July: Braco Castle Gardens, Perthshire



Garden events with children

We are delighted that our usual activities with children were allowed to start again in time for the summer. Ann Taylor and Michael held several events with groups of Barnardo's children, as well as having the Barnhill School Holiday Club back again. The Council's Ranger activities were also back up and running. **Anne Hesketh**



Michael's gardening tip

Gather seeds of hardy annuals such as Nasturtiums and Love in a Mist. Do not collect seed from F1 Hybrid plants (such as glasshouse pelargonium), as they do not come true from seed – cuttings would need to be taken instead. **Michael Laird**



A plea!

Never received an email sent in June about the Council events organised in the Garden for the summer? If so,

- please re send me your address in case you have changed it

or

- let me know if you do not wish communications by email.

Every time I send out a group email, I get 30 plus 'not able to be delivered' notices. The group email is our only way to let everyone know of any late additions or changes to our events programme. My email is **kathleengrocott@gmail.com**

Winter meetings

Following several requests this year, we are holding the winter meetings in the afternoons, rather than the evenings. We hope this will please many of you as it will avoid the dark nights. Do let us know your thoughts.

September 28th 2022:

AGM with reports from Michael Laird and John Grocott.

October 26th 2022:

Brian Carrol:
Trekking the Annapurna foothills

November 24th 2022:

Robbie Murray:
The Grocer's Boy

February 22nd 2023:

Andy Honeyman:
The Guide Dog Association

March 22nd 2023:

David Martin:
RNLI and the Mona Disaster

All meetings held at Broughty Ferry Baptist Church, 86 St Vincent Street, Broughty Ferry, DD5 2EZ, Wednesdays at 2.00pm.

Need to contact us?

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