



## Friends of the BARNHILL ROCK GARDEN

April  
Newsletter  
**2017**

### *From the Editor*

According to the news, this has been potentially the fourth mildest winter on record. However if you are like me, you will have preferred the cold sunny days we have had rather than the milder, cloudy ones. The latter don't tempt me into my own, mainly North facing garden. However, never daunted, there has been plenty garden activity by the Friends in all weathers with winter projects and other activities. Hopefully this newsletter will bring you up to date on recent events, along with a peep into the long awaited spring/summer, signs of which are shooting up fast.

**Anne Hesketh**

## Children in the Garden

*The garden receives many awards which help towards making it an important and desirable asset for the Council, especially in this time of austerity. As well as our horticultural activities, community involvement is a major feature of these awards. The Friends and the Council fund and run many activities to encourage children to visit and be involved in the garden. The article below is to give you some insight and maybe encourage you to send along your young relatives as well.*

**Editor**



**Countryside Rangers:** These attract large numbers of children, sometimes up to 120. The Rangers bring along lots of educational activities to teach children about nature and their surroundings, but most of all to have fun. Each event has a theme, eg Signs of Spring, allowing the children to identify spring flowers and insects; Pond Dipping, discovering what lives in the ponds. Children are also encouraged to bring along their own teddy bears for a Teddy Bears Picnic. Other times children investigate the garden for insects and beasties and this is aptly called The Ugly Bug Ball. Ah, but when October comes along the Rangers set up a Haggis Hunt or similar event around the Garden.

**The Storytellers:** The Broughty Ferry Librarians come along three times a year to read stories and sing songs to the under 7's to encourage them to start reading. This proves to be a popular event with approximately 20 children and adults attending. Over the years we have adapted this event to include a gazebo for shelter on a sunny day and nursery

chairs for the children to use in the Geddes Glasshouse on a rainy day.

We try to cater for all age groups in our events programme.

**Michael Laird**



### **School and other groups:**

The format for the younger groups varies with age. With nursery groups we use visual aids e.g. cardboard signs of various birds, with a short description of the birds, habitat, eating likes etc. We then see if they understand what we have been trying to convey with a chart, and their teachers or carers fill in the appropriate answers. Occasionally, if the weather is poor, we work in the Geddes greenhouse area and encourage them to make items using plasticine.

*continued overleaf*



## Children in the Garden *continued*

Sometimes Michael will set up pots and compost in which they can plant seeds, label the pot and take it back to the nursery to watch growing.

Recently the Frances Wright Pre-School Centre came and they found this more challenging. We also have school holiday groups like Barnhill who delight in planting bulbs and visiting areas of particular interest eg the ponds, when tadpoles are visible, looking at trees and discussing leaf formation ie whether prickly, evergreen, etc. These children also like to plant seeds and take home pots of wildflowers to grow. During the clean up days we have the local cubs who delight in planting bulbs, from daffodils to snowdrops. With facebook, we now receive requests from more groups and the volunteers take great delight showing the children round the garden, explaining the plants and creatures found around it.

**Ann Taylor**

## From the Chairman

Having recently taken over from Mary Saunders I am beginning to realise how many emails and phone calls there are concerning the Rock Garden and the Friends' activities. For the coming year, your committee has entered the Garden into the 'It's Your Neighbourhood Award' and the Environment Department have entered the Rock Garden into the Green Flag competition. Several of our committee, are also involved in the Broughty in Bloom competition.

We have been hosting our normal winter talks, now held at St. James Church Hall and have enjoyed hearing about a variety of subjects. The three summer visits are being arranged for May, June and July. Further details of these are to be found elsewhere in the Newsletter. It is our turn this year to hold a Gala in the Garden during Broughty Ferry Gala Week and the committee are working closely with the Council to organise events for the day.

As I write this, a multitude of buds and shoots are showing. The snowdrops and aconites in the garden look beautiful and the bees can be seen visiting the winter flowering heathers at our lovely garden. I only hope that these are the beginning of a good year for us all.

**John Grocott**



## From the Gardener

Hello again Friends, this winter, the team and I embarked on several projects to improve the garden. We have carried out major pruning, removed old shrubs and uncovered an area which will be replanted. It is hoped that most of the shrubs will rejuvenate and produce new growth. We have also uncovered many more rocks in the borders which will strengthen the Rock Garden theme. Tonnes of mulch have been spread on Sections 2 and 3 to improve nutrients in the soil. Ivy and Vinca has become a problem so we have had to remove these to ensure they do not take over the borders.

We are currently getting ready to service and clean the Geddes Glasshouse and contents. This is to ensure that your garden is ready for the season ahead. Once again, it is hoped to stage the usual program of events including the Gala in the Garden for you to come along and enjoy. Shrubs to look out for in the Rock Garden that are looking stunning at the moment are Garrya Elliptica and Viburnum x bodnantense "Dawn". These mature specimens, situated near the sunken garden beside the railway line, are well worth a look.

Thank you for your continued support.

**Michael Laird**

## From the Gardening Team



The Monday morning group, normally numbering 8 or 9 hardy souls, have been meeting every week from 10 am to 12.00 (but they did have a Christmas/New Year holiday).

It was agreed in the autumn that the 'winter work' focus would be on the Geddes Glasshouse area. The first task was to remove completely all the alpine plants from the Raised Bed, putting them in boxes and trays for temporary storage. The old compost was removed, with help from Michael and his electric buggy, and replaced with a fresh alpine mix. The alpine plants were then replanted in the bed with several groups of new bulbs and hopefully this will be a nice feature for some years. The group will also be improving the borders round the Glasshouse and adding more plants to several other areas of the garden which we maintain. In the Nursery Area, we are growing a wide variety of plants which will be used to enhance the different areas of the garden.

**John Grocott**





# SUMMER OUTINGS 2017

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## **Wednesday 17th May 2017: Willowhill Garden, Fife**

Departing from Broughty Ferry (opposite the library) at 1.00pm, this first outing of 2017 is to Willowhill. This is a three acre garden with mixed borders, vegetables, a stepped terrace of alpines and a wildlife pond. Tea/coffee and cakes will be served after the talk and tour. We estimate that we shall be back in Broughty Ferry around 4.45pm.



## **Wednesday 14th June 2017 : The Explorers' Garden, Pitlochry**

Our second trip is to the Explorers' Garden at Pitlochry. This garden is a six acre woodland garden dedicated to the Scottish Plant explorers who travelled the globe in search of new plants and trees for cultivation. The garden is separated into glades, representing the area of the world from which the plants come.

We leave Broughty Ferry at 11.00am and arrive at Pitlochry Theatre where a table is booked for us for lunch. We shall pay our own lunch. People can choose whether they want soup and a sandwich, or a cold or hot buffet. The garden tour begins at 1.30pm. The bus will leave again at 4.30pm and we hope to be back to the Ferry about 6.00pm.

## **Wednesday 19th July 2017: Cambo Gardens, Fife**

Our last trip is to Cambo. Many of you will be familiar with Cambo in snow drop time but the garden is worth a visit in all seasons with its walled garden, the burn and three bridges. Tea and coffee are available in the garden.

As usual we shall leave opposite Broughty Ferry Library at 1.00pm and we shall leave Cambo at 4.00pm.



## **Michael's gardening tip**

April is here and time to tie in Climbing and Rambling Roses. Also, start to increase the watering of houseplants, sow new lawns or repair bare patches.





**STOP**

## Stop Press!

**Discount:** Ashbrook Nurseries in Arbroath (winter talk, Feb 17) will give 5% discount on production of a Rock Garden membership card or a Senior's travel pass.

**Summer watering:** The summer watering team will start up again around May. They meet at the glasshouse on Thursdays 10.00 am. Further details from Marge Auras on 07707315908

**Friends away trip, Aberdeenshire, 5-8 June :** Only 13 people have signed up so far. More people are required to make this trip viable.

## 2 out of nearly 500?

We are very aware that many of our 500 members are elderly and younger ones are usually working with busy lives. Membership of all, however, is invaluable for supporting the plants/materials we buy, the additional gardeners and events we support etc. However if you are reasonably able we are now asking you to consider helping for a short time in the garden maybe twice a year. The 'clean up' used to attract 30+ adults and children and helped Michael set up the whole garden for the spring or winter.

At the last 'clean up' we only had **2 Friends** who were not already a committee member. On hearing this one incredulous lady, an ex committee member from a few years ago, said about the garden "use it, help it or lose it". So we'd love to see a few more of you at the next one. **Anne Hesketh**

## Need to contact us

**Chairman:**

**John Grocott: 779581**

**Secretary:**

**Anne Hesketh: 739982**

**Treasurer:**

**Heather Dailly: 778061**

**Barnhill Rock Garden:**

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**Friends of the  
Barnhill Rock Garden**

## Thanks

It is part of Howden Joinery company policy, to give back to the community through donating each year to local charities. Chairman, John Grocott, was delighted to receive a cheque recently from Brian Mudie, Area Manager.



## Calendar of events

### Garden Events

**Sat 22nd April:** Spring Clean up 10 am -1 pm with a coffee break. Once again your help would be very much appreciated.

**Sat 8th July:** Gala in the Garden. A free family event with lots to do for all the family

### Activities for Children

**Wed 12th April:** 1pm - 3pm Countryside Ranger Service – Signs of Spring

**Thurs 6th July:** 11am -11.30am Storytelling with Dundee Libraries

**Thurs 20th July:** 11am – 11.30am Storytelling with Dundee Libraries

**Wed 26th July:** 1pm - 3pm Countryside Ranger Service – Ugly Bug Ball

**Thurs 3rd August:** 11am – 11.30am Storytelling with Dundee libraries

**Wed 9th August:** 1pm – 3pm Countryside Ranger Service – Nature Detectives

**Wed 18th October:** Countryside Ranger Service – Harvest Homes

### Outings (see previous page for details)

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