

Friends of the
BARNHILL ROCK GARDEN

Spring Newsletter 2022

From the Editor

At the time of writing this, we are still working under some restrictions from Covid and the Council, but these are thankfully beginning to ease. There has been, however, no let up in the challenges faced. You can read about the storm that affected so much of the region, but which surprisingly helped us to address another problem. Contractor issues, however, have resulted in a lack of progress on our landscaping plans. But the Garden is still flourishing despite everything, and we are all looking forward to a more normal season with summer outings, first scheduled for 2020, back on the agenda.

Anne Hesketh

A Double Whammie

Just as we thought we had more or less got back to normal, (but still observing all the Covid restrictions), the Rock Garden was hit with storm Arwen, in late November. Gusts of over 110 miles per hour ravaged the Garden, devastating a small copse of Eucalyptus, resulting in the loss of at least six, along with some older Pines. It did not just overturn them, but dislodged them totally, the roots being very visible. It was a sight one would not wish to see but there was no loss of life, only sorrow at the devastation. We at least knew the Garden would bounce back in the Spring.

We returned to the Garden early January and set about some form of clearing up, knowing that the Council would be tackling the heavy stuff, but the story does not end there. Late January, within a period of 36 hours, we were hit by two storms, namely Malik, followed closely by Corrie, and again the winds battered the trees. Some of the older pines, nearest to the toilet area were dislodged and fell down over the pavement, but again with no injury to the public.

There has now been some work done by Network Rail, removing some of our trees that were quite adjacent to the railway. Although some of the areas look bare, there is some scope for new planting. However, with no damage to the new Buckie or the Geddes Glasshouse, I feel we have come off lightly compared to other areas.

Ann Taylor



Splash of Spring?

Each year, in early Spring, we get a lovely patch in the grass of Ipheion in flower. This year, they are covered by the fallen branches, so we are waiting to see how they get on. We usually pot up some of these little bulbs and sell them on the plant table, when it is open. By then, not in flower and looking rather insignificant, they rarely sell. However, if you would like to try to build up your own patch, do let us know.

Anne Hesketh





From the Chairman

Storm Arwen hit Dundee on Friday November 26th and a massive amount of damage was caused, with trees blown down over a huge area of East Scotland. Local damage was also widespread. Here, at the Rock Garden, trees were blown over, more damaged and a few left leaning precariously. Nearby parts of Reres Hill were left looking like a WW1 battlefield!

Another change has arisen due to Council restructuring. Michael, although based at the Buckie, is now on a 3 day week at the Rock Garden, with additional responsibilities elsewhere.

The winter weather, so far, has not been too bad, allowing the Monday Team to get on with our list of jobs. I am very pleased with the number of willing workers, who come down every Monday, and we are getting through our winter work programme. Now that the fallen trees are being cleared away, logs which were previously unobtainable locally, are being used for the edging of Snowdrop Wood.

I have to report that there has been no progress on the 'new wall and steps project', despite choosing a competitive quote. Hopefully, we can get work started sometime soon. There is also a problem with the 'Water Feature' in the Garden, which, we are told, is going to be too expensive to repair. We have asked the Council to obtain estimates for this work.

Despite all this, early signs of Spring are everywhere. Your committee is hopeful that our three trips in the summer and the much delayed trip to the Gardens of North Wales will take place this year.

John Grocott



From the Gardener

After all the storms and damage this winter, seeing the snowdrops and aconites in full bloom has cheered me up! It's been a long battle clearing up the damage after each storm to ensure the Garden is safe for everyone to work in and enjoy. The surplus of branches have been cut into logs and made useful along with the bark chippings to freshen up the paths.

Despite the harsh weather the 'boys' and I have been steadily working through an extensive pruning and mulching programme. Pruning is to rejuvenate shrubs and trees and improve access for visitors; mulching is to enhance the soil quality and plant nutrition. We are currently working our way through the borders, cutting down the last of the herbaceous plants. We will be shortly turning our attention to cleaning and servicing the Geddes glasshouse and outdoor furniture, to ensure it is maintained and safe for visitors. I hope, eventually, the Geddes will be back open to the public for people to discover the site's history and learn about what's happening in the Garden (fingers crossed).

I hope to get busy in the greenhouse soon, sowing seeds, now things are heating up, to help fill gaps in the planting schemes. Several benches were taken away to be re painted and repaired and will soon be back in place for visitors to have seat and enjoy their surroundings and views.

I am looking forward to ensuring the garden is ready for visitors and Friends to enjoy once again, as best I can, and, hopefully, in a more normal summer. Once again thank you for your continued support.

Michael Laird



From the Gardening Team

With Snowdrop Wood bursting into life as I write this, it is pleasing to note that, regularly, a good number of hardy souls appear at the garden to lend a hand and, of course, enjoy a social coffee break when the 11 o'clock train to London passes!

This Winter, we are starting to revamp two planted areas which are near the recently installed Portacabin. We are also replanting the area known as scree 3, as well as adding plants to other scree areas and around the Geddes Glasshouse. Usual activities in the nursery continue so that we can bring on plants for the Garden and plant sales table. Although we were hoping to carry out planting near the new wall and steps, it looks as if this will be delayed as construction is yet to start.

During the Spring and Summer, a smaller group also go to the garden on Thursday mornings to check on watering and other seasonal jobs in the garden and nursery.

John Grocott



SUMMER OUTINGS 2022

*The summer outings planned for this year are the same as those that were cancelled due to Covid. The three venues, described below, are looking forward to our visit on the new dates shown. For those of you who have not been before, you are asked to write a forward dated cheque for **each** trip, the cheque being presented/cashed only at the time of your joining the outing.*



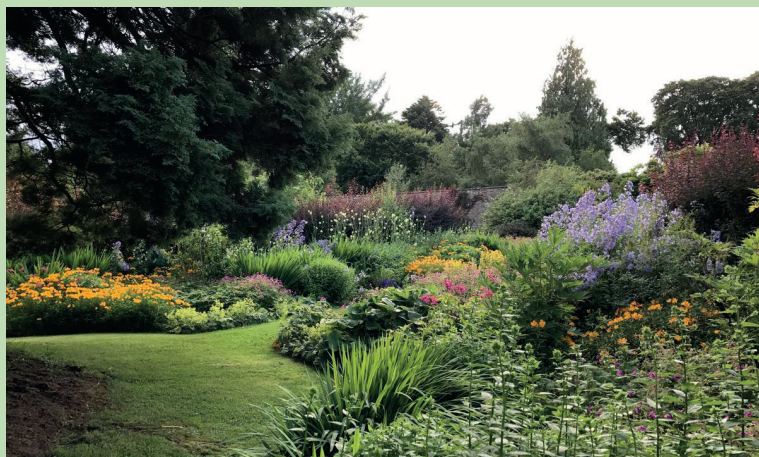
© Anne Burgess

Tuesday 14th June 2022 **Saughton Park, Edinburgh**

Our first visit this year is to the refurbished Saughton Park in Edinburgh – another hidden jewel according to Edinburgh Outdoors! We shall leave opposite Broughty Ferry Library at 10.00 am and hope to arrive by 11.30 am. After a coffee/tea break at the café, we will get a short talk from one of the Friends of Saughton Park, before wandering at will till 3.30 pm, when we shall depart for Dundee. Snacks and meals are available at the Bistro Café.

Wednesday 13th July 2022 **Braco Castle Gardens, Perthshire**

Leaving opposite Broughty Ferry library at 12.00 noon, we will first visit Crieff Garden Centre, where there will be time for a snack, or a short browse. From there we travel to the garden at Braco Castle. It is described as a 19th Century landscaped garden with a plethora of wonderful and interesting shrubs, bulbs and plants; an old garden for all seasons which has been tastefully expanded over the last 29 years by Mr and Mrs M van Ballegooijen. The partly walled garden is approached on a rhododendron and tree-lined path featuring an ornamental pond. Spectacular spring bulbs and ornamental trees are all enhanced by the fantastic views of the Ochils. From the snowdrops through to the vibrant colours of autumn, this garden is a gem. The garden also contains a very interesting collection of azaleas. We anticipate leaving Braco for home around 4.00 pm.



© Jodi Simpson



© Crathes Castle

Thursday 18th August, 2022 **Crathes Castle**

We leave Broughty Ferry en route for Crathes at 10.00 am. It is one of the National Trust of Scotland's most attractive properties. Situated in Royal Deeside, the journey should only take a little over an hour and, hopefully, we will arrive in time to purchase coffee (and maybe a cake). The group can then split up to visit the delightful gardens or beautifully preserved castle or, if exercise is needed, the adventure play area!

It is worth noting that the garden is a 'R.H.S. Partner Garden' and has many interesting plants on show. There should be plenty of time to see the castle and gardens and enjoy some refreshment before we board the coach at 4.30 pm for the return home. Remember to bring your NT card if you are a member of the National Trust.

© Amanda Slater



Michael's gardening tip

Pruning plants can be a little daunting, but if you learn how to do the job properly, you will be rewarded with plants that look good, grow well and fruit and flower better. The key is knowing when to prune, how to make the cuts and good shape. Google or a good pruning book is always worth investigating before starting a pruning job.

Michael Laird



STOP

Stop Press!

- After several requests, we are having a trial run of Winter talks in the afternoon, rather than the evening. Full details in the Autumn newsletter.
- If you no longer have a cheque book, we will accept cash for outings. However, having separate and forward-dated cheques for each outing, which are cashed on the day of the trip, makes the administration of cancellations etc easier.



Wales at last!

We are delighted that the much postponed trip to the Gardens of North Wales is finally going to take place in May. At the time of printing, 33 members have signed up to visit these noted Welsh Gardens and Portmeirion. All we need now is the sun to shine!

Kate Grocott

Any suggestions?

Planning ahead for the 2022-23 Winter Talks, we invite you to send us suggestions for subjects and lecturers. Have you heard a great talk that may interest the Friends?

Our focus is mainly on topics linked to gardening, conservation, nature, and local history. However, important issues common to us all, such as pollution and the effects of a warming and turbulent climate, could be included.

If you have any ideas, please contact me at godfrey.jnicholson@hotmail.co.uk or on 01382 770073.

Godfrey Nicholson

Calendar of events

Garden Events

At present, there are no events in the Garden arranged for this summer. However, should any be arranged at a later date, we will email the information to members and advertise the event in the Garden, as well as on our website and Facebook page.

Summer Outings

(see previous page for details)

Tuesday 14th June 2022:

Saughton Park, Edinburgh

Wednesday 13th July 2022:

Braco Castle Gardens, Perthshire

Thursday 18th August, 2022:

Crathes Castle

Need to contact us?

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