



Newsletter - Autumn 2013

"The UK has enjoyed its warmest, driest and sunniest summer since 2006" (Met Office)



Well, it's in the paper so it must be true! Perhaps it explains why so many of my flowers and plants have shrivelled up and died, while bushes and weeds (oh, the weeds!) have doubled in size and now look me in the face instead of being about knee high.

But the Rock Garden is firmly under control (oh yes it is!) as the summer's many visitors will confirm; and if you haven't been to see it, do so without delay.

I am delighted to report that our Ian Baxby won gold in the weightlifting competition in July, and has also taken part in Scotland's football team 'B' during the Special Olympics last month. He's going to need a new mantelpiece to hold all his trophies! Well done Ian - we are proud of you.



Editor

Take a handful of dirt and rub it between your finger and thumb. This is called 'understanding your soil'. Soil, like water, is the source of all life on the planet. If it slips through your fingers and blows away in the wind, it is sandy; if you could use it to make ashtrays and other small decorative items, it is clay. Anything in between is called 'filthy loam'.



Work Party Report

We have embarked on the total renovation of an 'island bed' (75 sq m) at the western end of the garden. Clearance is well under way, useful plants and bulbs set aside, and all unwanted growth has been removed. The Environment Department has agreed to provide any topsoil, Discovery compost or other organic matter required, and we will fund the replacement plants.

The Monday team continues to improve and maintain our designated areas, and additional help with operations in the nursery section would enable us to increase our output. A regular Thursday period from 10 am-12 noon is now in operation (coffee at 11!) and we do need your support on either day. Can you spare an occasional hour or two? Please contact me or any Committee member for further information.

John Grocott



Need to contact us? - call

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Noisy birds aside, this can be a wonderful time for sitting in your garden and appreciating the unique mellow, golden light of September. Your trees are already firing up their autumn tints and giving your garden a pleasing, apocalyptic quality that makes you yearn for winter when everything has died back and you can stop mowing the lawn for 4 months.

From the Chairman's Diary -

Despite the unusual weather conditions, work on improvements to the Rock Garden has continued and also our support for Broughty Ferry in Bloom. The Spring Clean-up went well with the help of the Monifieth 1st Cub Scouts and their leaders who undertook another litter-pick.

For health reasons, I was unable to go on any of the Summer trips and must thank Anne Chalmers for leading the half-day and full day outings; also John & Kate Grocott who stepped in as leaders for the trip to Argyll (the reports are on pages 2 & 3).

The children's programme this year was very well supported, and we are indebted to the local librarians and Countryside Rangers, and children from Barnhill After School Group who assisted us by testing a new children's tree trail.



The Friends were asked by the Council to provide refreshments for 'Gala in the Garden' and this year the Gala was blessed with good weather, ensuring a good turnout. We also provided refreshments for Broughty Ferry in Bloom's Secret Garden Trail and were encouraged by the numbers turning up, even though Andy Murray was doing his thing! Both events helped to raise funds for the Friends.



Helen Fleming's legacy enabled us to provide 2 new picnic tables, which have already proved very popular, and some children's chairs have also been bought.



I hope many Friends will come to the Age Concern Hall to hear our speakers (programme on back page) and I look forward to meeting you there or down at the Garden.

Mary Saunders



If your plants seem happy, keep doing what you're doing. If they're not thriving then dig them up and threaten them with the compost heap. Then replant and watch carefully for a couple of weeks. If they still don't shape up, throw them away and try something else. Life's too short to grow prima donnas!

Garden Update: - Fantastic weather ensured we had many visitors enjoying the garden this year. From April onwards the borders gave a great display of colour. All the seeds that were sown in Spring were planted out, filling any gaps. We are now thinking about Autumn and Winter jobs including bulb planting and pruning. I look forward to another busy season. Thank you for your continued support!



Michael Laird



Thoughts for September - people who garden regularly do not live longer, it's just that many pensioners draw attention to themselves by the very act of being in their gardens. There are many older folk whom you never see because the secret of their longevity is to sit inside in their pyjamas all day watching TV.

Notes on our Summer Outings



22 May: Balcarres, Fife - on a cold windy afternoon! The garden was delightful, particularly the rhododendrons, and we were treated to afternoon tea with delicious home bakes.

13 June: Logie House, Fife. Mrs Sarah Hunt, the owner, welcomed us and we spent the warm, sunny afternoon admiring the hostas, flowering wisteria on the walls, and beds packed with ground cover plants. High tea was provided at Lundin Links Hotel.

28 June-1 July: Private gardens of Argyll. After a wet start, the weather gradually improved as we drove west to Ardchattan Priory on the shore of Loch Etive. It has a garden, ruined chapel, graveyard and early stones dating from 1230. At our hotel in Oban, the food was excellent, but there were some issues with the accommodation for single people. On the Saturday we visited An Cala on the Isle of Seil, crossing the 'Bridge over the Atlantic' on the way. A special feature in this garden was a summerhouse of fir cones from around the world, made into a work of art. Later in the morning, our coach overcame the difficult access to the garden at Ardmaddy Castle, with its extensive garden, an abundance of clematis and a pond with an edging of candelabra primulas. The sheltered National Trust garden at Arduaine was our destination in the afternoon, with gunera and skunk cabbages growing, as well as magnolia shrubs. On Sunday, the first visit was to Crarae Gardens (again owned by the National Trust), created round a 'glen' with rhododendrons, azaleas and other Asiatic plants - very attractive but slippery paths after heavy rain. In the afternoon, some of us had a photo shoot



beside Britain's tallest tree in Ardinglas Gardens - the weather had improved but conditions were still very damp. Our last port of call on the way home was Inverary Castle & Garden, with attractive borders, but some parts were 'under development' All in all, an interesting and enjoyable weekend, despite the disappointing weather.

24 July: New Lanark - World Heritage site. This cotton mill village was founded by Robert Owen in 1785 and we were taken on a tour of the site. There was plenty to see - a school, mill worker's house, Robert Owen's house, the village store and a woodland walk. The 'Roof Garden' - Scotland's largest - has a large patio area where people can sit and relax. The steep hill back to the coach presented a difficulty to some of the group, however, it was a good day's outing and we enjoyed high tea at Baxters in Blackford on the way home.

Anne Chalmers

NB - Daphne Barbieri has produced a 10 minute video of the Friends' trip to Oban & Argyll. Copies are available at a cost of £5.50 inclusive of delivery. Please contact Mary Saunders if you would like to purchase one.



*October gave a party; The leaves by hundreds came -
The Chestnuts, Oaks, and Maples, And leaves of every name.
The Sunshine spread a carpet, And everything was grand,
Miss Weather led the dancing, Professor Wind the band.*



(George Cooper, "October's Party")



- PLEASE NOTE THESE DATES IN YOUR DIARY NOW!

Autumn/Winter programme
2013/2014

2013

Wednesday
25 September

Annual General Meeting
Age Concern Hall - 7.30 pm
See separate sheet

Saturday
5 October
10 am - 2 pm

Autumn Clean-up - Usual arrangements - please let a member of Committee know if you hope to come. All help appreciated - coffee, soup & sandwiches provided, donations appreciated. Tel 477761 with any questions.

TALKS

Unless otherwise stated, these meetings will be held in the Age Concern Hall, Brook Street, Broughty Ferry (100 yards west of St Vincent Street, on the north side), at 7.30 pm, and refreshments will be provided.

2013

Wednesday
23 October

'The Good Doers - A Nurseryman's View'
Graeme Butler, Rumbling Bridge Nurseries

Wednesday
27 November

'A World of Gardens'
Graeme Mitchell - Managing Director, Brightwater Holidays

2014

Wednesday
26 February

'The Role of the Lifeboat in Broughty Ferry'
Ian Philp, Chairman, Broughty Ferry Lifeboat Management Group

Wednesday
26 March

'Recent Visit Down Under'
Alasdair Hood, Curator, Dundee Botanic



Friends of Barnhill Rock Garden is a registered Scottish Charity no SCO28973.