



## Friends of the BARNHILL ROCK GARDEN

Autumn  
Newsletter  
**2018**

### *From the Editor*

When the last newsletter was drafted, Winter seemed to be going on for ever with Spring reluctant to show its face. Now, after a short Spring, we have had an incredible summer with people saying they have never seen the grass in the Rock Garden so brown. This newsletter will no doubt tell you how Michael and the garden team have been coping. Read also about the visit to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. See if the long trip down was worth it and see if you are tempted to go yourself if, like me, you have never been before. Finally, don't forget our programme of winter talks. We like to make sure there is something of interest for all our many members.

**Anne Hesketh**



**"Why would you be bothered to go to Chelsea when you can see it better on television?"**

This question was asked when we said we were having a joint 'Friends of the Rock Garden/Botanic Garden' trip to Chelsea Flower Show. We decided to ask our group if they thought it was worth going. Overwhelmingly the folk who went were very happy to have gone. The atmosphere, the scents, the arrays of flowers and plants and, for one of our number, the ability to try on and buy purple wellies all lent to the occasion.

The Great Pavilion with its displays in peak condition despite the cold spring, was singled out by many as their favourite space. Dahlias, ferns, alliums, clematis, bonsai etc. were all shown in immaculate forms. The Windrush Stand with its vibrant colours was a favourite with quite a few of our group.

We also asked what they disliked most and the answer was the crowds, especially round the show gardens, and lack of places to sit and have a rest. One person said having to leave was what she disliked most!

## Chelsea visit



Returning to the Ferry 'bristling with ideas', 'pure, dead, brilliant' and 'I really enjoyed seeing behind the scenes i.e. all the areas and activities you never see on TV' were just some of the comments we received.

So if you are thinking of going, here is a tip from a seasoned Chelsea 'goer', "Go at opening times and/or wait until after 4.30 pm to see the most popular exhibits."

**Kate Grocott**





## From the Chairman

I feel it only right that I write a few lines about our **founding** chairperson, Isobel Turner, who died earlier this year.

Isobel lived her whole life in Barnhill. Always keenly interested in local history and affairs, she was so infuriated when the Council began 'destroying the garden' to reduce maintenance costs that she left the hairdressers in a hurry (so I was told) to confront the tractor drivers and council staff. The former had to stop work! This was followed by a hastily arranged public meeting in the Y.M.C.A. in Broughty Ferry. The Friends of Barnhill Rock Garden was formed, with the aim of preserving the garden for local people, and the packed hall unanimously elected Isobel as Chairperson. It was primarily Isobel's drive and personality that has led the F.B.R.G. being the established community group it is today. The picture shows Isobel cutting the cake at the garden's 60th year celebration in 2015.



Love of music also played a major part in Isobel's life. She taught music in local primary schools and sang with The Choral Union and her church choir for many years. Just a few weeks before her death, she told Michael that she would have to hurry away, as she had to go and play for the 'old folks' (Isobel being over 90 at this time)!

Looking ahead, rather than back, I look forward to seeing a good number of Friends on 26th September, at our A.G.M. Remember it will be held in our **new venue - Broughty Baptist Church Hall, St Vincent's Street.**

**John Grocott**

## From the Gardener

Hello again Friends.

The excellent weather has made our garden extremely popular this summer with visitors of all ages. However, it has not been so popular with our plants and lawns, which have struggled with the drought. Despite this, most have survived and flowered as normal. I think mulching the borders for several years has helped to retain any moisture in the soil.

The team and I have continued to maintain the garden to a high standard, ensuring it is ready for all its judging, inspections, tours and events throughout the season. At the start of the year, we embarked on reseeding five areas of lawn in front of the Geddes Glasshouse, which are now looking satisfactory. Our Osteospermums, Camellias, Magnolias and Wisterias all flowered well this year. I was also pleased to see several old shrubs that we pruned back in the winter have recovered, and produced lovely fresh growth.

We now look forward to getting on with bulb planting and all the other autumn/winter jobs and projects, ensuring we are ready for 2019 and I will keep you up-to-date with our progress.

Thank you for your continued support.

**Michael Laird**



## From the Gardening Team

The 'Monday Morning Team' continue to meet and carry out a wide range of general maintenance jobs. Two of our regular team, Barry and Muriel Crawshaw, have moved away and will be missed. They donated several plants from their garden to us before they left.

Several fresh faces have joined the team and we are beginning to think ahead to autumn and winter projects to improve those areas of the garden we look after. As I write this, the drought we have been experiencing has been broken by some very welcome rain, but we are still having to water our newly planted areas as the high temperatures are forecast to continue. As you will see from the photo, Monday morning also includes an enjoyable chat and coffee. It is not all about taxing work so why not join us?

**John Grocott**

## Michael's gardening tip

**Make sure you give young plants plenty of water but always avoid wetting the leaves as this could lead to mould, rot and/or a sick plant. Remember yellow leaves can mean too much water.**





# SUMMER OUTINGS 2018

*Due to the Chelsea holiday, our three summer outings started in June this year rather than May. We currently await our August outing to Dr Neil's Garden at Duddingston Village, Edinburgh. However, you can read about our other two.*

## **June: Pitcurran House, Abernethy**



Storm Hector was blowing all morning when we left for Pitcurran House near Abernethy. The Tay Bridge was still closed, the bus swayed as it drove over the Friarton Bridge, but things got a little calmer on arrival as the winds eased.



After an introductory talk by the owners we were left to wander. They had moved in fourteen years ago and removed a tennis court to create a garden. Spreading round the house and up the hill at the back, the garden

became more meadow-like with buttercups and daisies. Mown grass paths enabled exploration and led to viewpoints. There were island beds of specimens shrubs and trees, white foxgloves stood tall and aquilegia grew, in various shades, where they had self-seeded. In the middle a large pond, fed by a burn, boasted carp. The edges were naturalistically planted with wildflowers including ragged robin, gunnera, marsh marigolds and buttercups.

Walking down towards the house, it became more formal with many interesting plants. Terraced beds and climbing roses surrounded the courtyard at the back of the house. It was here we congregated for teas (Earl Grey or Darjeeling), and home baked cakes before heading home.

**Liz Taylor**

## **July: Backhouse at Rossie Estate**

After our coach driver had backed us through the eye of a needle (he got a resounding ovation!), we were enlightened by a fascinating talk in the Heritage and Education Centre on Backhouse's 150 years of horticulture history. They are specialists in Narcissi culture, holding The National Collection here. This prepared us for the

main walled garden which had originally held all the propagation glasshouses and, over the last 12 years, has been transformed into the present garden.

Passing the subdued tones of the Fern Border we enjoyed the scent of many roses, the long herbaceous borders, and the mixed herb/herbaceous/rose garden laid out in a latticework of gravel paths. Particularly appealing was the long airy helix walk beneath arches of climbing white roses, with the path patterned with the interlocking DNA symbol. As time ran out few, if any of us, managed to explore the woodland walk and seek the Covenanter's Tomb.



We ended our thoroughly enjoyable visit with the customary tea and cakes and the purchase of plants, and our driver found it a little easier going out than coming in.

**Godfrey Nicholson**



## **Funding success**

With this being the Year of Young People we have been very busy bidding for funding for child oriented activities. We have now received a grant of £1000 pounds from the Alexander Moncur Trust, a prominent fund within the Dundee area who give to worthy community projects each year. The money is to assist with funds to purchase tools, games and literature to meet the educational needs of children's groups.

We also applied for a grant from Tesco under their 'Bags for Life' scheme and have just heard we have been successful. This scheme involved several local Tesco stores. Blue tokens were available for shoppers to nominate their most worthwhile cause from a choice of three, the Friends being one of the options. Voting closed at the end of June. Many thanks to those of you who asked for a token and voted for us. The money is to be used for enhancing the wild flower meadow, with help from the children.



## Funding success (continued)

Recently Michael Laird and myself organised a competition with the children from Barnhill Primary School to name the bug hotel. This was erected by the Rangers, in conjunction with the holiday club and their leaders. The name chosen by them all was 'The Bug Inn' and a sign has been made to depict this.

We have several other projects in the pipeline which the funding received will go towards. So, once again, watch this space.  
**Ann Taylor**



## Garden Surprise

With the recent long dry summer, many of us will have long forgotten the wet Autumn days we had last year. The picture below reminds me of that. This photo was taken next to the pavement alongside the Rock Garden one Monday morning, late September. The beautiful display of fungi was at its best for only a couple of days.

**Anne Hesketh**

## GDPR again!

Due to a change in law you will recently have been inundated by businesses and organisations with regard to your personal data. We hold a data base of members with their name, address, telephone number and, for some, email address. This is purely for committee members to keep you up to date with newsletters and information on activities, and is not shared with third parties. Details are deleted on request or when a member fails to renew their subscription after 2 years.

## Need to contact us?

**Chairman:** John Grocott: 779581

**Vice Chairman:** Ann Taylor 737573

**Secretary:** Anne Hesketh: 739982

**Treasurer:** Heather Dailly: 778061

**Membership Secretary:** Kate Grocott 779581

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**Friends of the  
Barnhill Rock Garden**

## Winter meetings

**September 26th 2018**

*AGM followed by a film by Daphne Barbieri of Friends' activities during 2017/18*

**October 24th 2018**

*Graeme Butler of Rumbling Bridge Nursery: Dwarf Shrubs for Alpine Gardens*

**November 28th 2018**

*Andy Paterson: Stars of the Silver Screen*

**February 27th 2019**

*Clare Reaney: Alpines of the Maritime Alps*

**March 27th 2019**

*Anne Tee: The West Coast of South Africa, Spring flowers and Birds*

**All meetings now held at Broughty Ferry Baptist Church, 86 St Vincent Street, Broughty Ferry, DD5 2EZ, Wednesdays at 7.30pm.**



## Stop Press!

A 'call to arms': Autumn Clean up, 6th October from 10.00 to 12.30pm with a coffee break. All ages welcome and appreciated, so come for as long or short a time as you can manage.

*We hope you find the new venue for the winter talks (see above) a little easier for parking.*