



Friends of the  
**BARNHILL ROCK GARDEN**

**Spring Newsletter 2021**

## ***From the Editor***

It is, of course, now a year since normal activities have taken place in the Garden and with the Friends in general. After a brief spell of activity, reported in our Autumn newsletter, we went back to square one. Once again we are publishing a shortened newsletter to bring you up to date with what has been happening. There is some positive news along with the uncertainty and, hopefully, light at the end of the tunnel.

**Anne Hesketh**

## ***From the Chairman***

As I pen these few words, at the end of February, I can only reflect that we are still in a lockdown situation with only essential shopping allowed, very local travel and people meeting only in/with their 'bubbles'. The NHS has been furiously getting the inoculations out to all and sundry and no doubt will be continuing this work well on into the year.

Following a very cold January and a heavy fall of snow in February, we have had a rapid thaw and are now enjoying an unusually mild spell of weather. At the end of January the aconites in the snowdrop wood could be barely seen peeking through the snow, but now are a picture. Suddenly we have bulbs not only showing, but flowering and reminding us that spring is just round the corner.

*continued overleaf*



## ***The Journey's end – almost!***

*From our first approach to the Council for a replacement buckie in late 2017, through to approval for the project in September 2019, the long await for a replacement buckie has become a reality. The Friends are overjoyed and grateful to the Council. Ann Taylor continues the story described in our newsletter last Spring. Editor*

Early November, despite all the turmoil of Covid, the building to replace the old metal Portakabin, known as 'The Buckie', commenced. A large area was fenced off, leaving a small entry to the Nursery and the Geddes Greenhouse. The patio of slabs was lifted for re-laying at the end of the project. The exciting part was seeing the old building dismantled by an acetylene torch. The work progressed with the excavation and laying down of the new foundations, together with new electrical connections. All work then stopped to allow the base to dry. It seemed an endless wait...

Understandably there was great excitement when news came of the date and approximate time that the replacement portacabin would arrive, under escort, from Edinburgh. The Friends wanted to be there! We waited with baited breath at the estimated time, only to be told that due to traffic they were stuck at Camperdown and to come down later. However, it arrived safely and was soon lifted by a large crane into its final resting place.

From then on work progressed quickly. All fencing came down in early December, leaving only electric shutters to go on. We now wait patiently for all the power connections, building warrants etc and Covid restrictions to end, and then both the Friends and the Gardener can move into the new premises.

**Ann Taylor**





*continued*

I was delighted to see, at last, the new portacabin installed in the Rock garden. It was quite startling seeing it being craned into position! I look forward to sitting on the re-laid patio with a 'morning coffee' later in the year. New landscaping around this patio is the next major project for the Friends.

For the time being the Committee has decided that our usual three summer outings are again on hold. I am cautiously optimistic that we may be able to resume our spirit lifting and horticulturally interesting trips towards the end of the summer.

**John Grocott**

## From the Gardener

First I would like to thank you all for the lovely cards and letters of support which I received whilst I was off ill. When I returned in November, my main concern was getting the garden back on its feet. So I rolled up my sleeves and got stuck in. I started to cut back, weed and edge Sections 1 and 2 (the front part of the garden). My main priority was to try and get the garden back in order.

From January, I started the winter work and general maintenance. This entailed our annual pruning programme, which included the removal of a large conifer leaning over the Geddes Glasshouse. The Forestry Department was on hand to help. After servicing the Glasshouse, cleaning inside and outside of the glass, the next job was to start tidying the East part of the Garden and Section 3. However, I was seconded to stewarding at the Caird Hall Vaccination Centre and have been there for the past few months. Despite the chaotic year, I am determined to get the Garden back to normal and to the high, pre lockdown standard for both Friends and visitors to enjoy.

**Michael Laird**



## From the Gardening Team

The Monday Team was allowed to meet through the autumn and good progress was made tackling the spring/midsummer surge in weed growth which had grown, unchecked, during the first lockdown. A particular problem was reclaiming the newly replanted island bed, but we did get it back under control.

A 'Winter Work Programme' was worked out with the team and Michael. A start was made on seven separate jobs when a halt to operations was called again. Fortunately, the contractors appointed to install the new 'Buckie' did get the whole job done.

Once we are released from lockdown, it will be great to get back to our Monday routine. On a walk round the Garden the other day, I noticed the 11 o'clock London train passing. We will still know when to have our coffee break!

**John Grocott**



## Update on summer events

### **Friends' holiday: Wales 17th-21st May 2021**

It looks unlikely that this trip, postponed from last year, will take place. I am awaiting further contact from Glenton. Their website states '...please rest assured that we are still here and that if any future holiday plans need to be reviewed, we will be in contact with our customers in departure date order...' I will email everyone in the group as soon as I hear more.

**Kate Grocott**

### **Summer outings**

Current restrictions mean that there is again uncertainty regarding the three outings postponed from 2020. At the moment it is unclear whether they could be feasible or viable. Hopefully restrictions in late summer may allow the later ones to go ahead. Details will be emailed nearer the time to members and advertised in the Garden.

### **Council run Garden events**

There is also uncertainty about the band concerts, as well as the Library and Ranger led activities for children, usually held throughout the summer in the Garden. Should there be any events later in the summer, we will email the information to members and advertise the event in the Geddes.

## Need to contact us?

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