



Friends of the
BARNHILL ROCK GARDEN

Autumn Newsletter 2023

From the Editor

Summer is always a busy time in any garden. This year was no exception with several projects to complete, as well as having to contend with periods of high temperatures and sudden downfalls. With the recent humid, changeable weather, the weeds have been having a hay day! This newsletter will update you on all our activities, projects and plans.

Anne Hesketh

Fun and learning at the Garden



For the past few years, since Covid restrictions have been lifted, we have enjoyed the company of quite a few schools at the Rock Garden. The requests and numbers of children have increased dramatically. Our fame has gone before us!

Our stalwarts from Barnhill Holiday club have visited us for many years, topping up the bug hotel and planting wild flowers etc. We also have have had some new comers

such as Eastern Primary School, who visited us en force in June. The children from Primaries 1 and 2 tended to be quite boisterous, as 5-6 years olds are, but they were utterly thrilled with everything laid on for them and a little disappointed that there was no frog spawn in our pond. P3s from Barnhill Primary School are coming shortly.

We also have had children from Barnardos. They were delighted with the flora/fauna and the garden

games we provided. As you will appreciate, we find that with different ages, we have to pitch the events to suit the children and with some groups this can mean a one to one approach. We are always grateful for the many helpers who come to lend a hand.

Overall, therefore, it has been quite a success. We hope this continues and we delight the children, not only from our area, but other parts of the town.

Ann Taylor

Iain & Ian – two stalwarts of the Garden

Last newsletter we showed Iain Hunter being recognised by the Friends for 25 years of volunteering. Ian Baxby has now racked up 20 years. Both started as young, enthusiastic volunteers and are an enormous help to Michael, on a weekly basis, in the maintenance of the whole garden.

Anne Hesketh



From the Chairman

At one of our regular committee meetings, the number of members of the Friends was recorded as being around 500. It is really great to know that we have such a strong membership. The committee ran through arrangements for the remaining summer outing, the children's activities and bookings, the AGM and the forthcoming winter talks.

I am pleased to report that we have now completed the planting of the Link Bed and the bed close to the repaired retaining wall, including a lavender hedge by the patio. Planning for next year's away trip to the Cheshire area and RHS Bridgewater is being organised with the coach company Glenton. We hope to be able to confirm very shortly the dates and the hotel at which we will be based, along with the cost for the holiday.

So, with our summer trips, winter talks, children's activities and our 'Monday Team' involved with improvements to the Rock Garden, I can say that I am quite satisfied that the Friends are a busy, functioning community group.

John Grocott



From the Gardening Team

Meeting the other members of the group, who are usually cheerful, is a great way to start the week. Normally 10-12 in number, we manage to have a lively chat at the 11.00 coffee break.

Since the spring newsletter was delivered, we have been kept busy looking after the areas for which we are responsible. With the hot dry weather, we have been watering the Heather Border and the Link Border, which have both been recently planted. The much awaited warm weather, with record breaking high temperatures in June, but very little rain, reminds us once again that we need to be careful with our planting and select the 'right plant for the right place'.

We are now making up an autumn/winter programme of works which will keep the group busy into the future.

John Grocott



From the Gardener

The Garden has been abundant with colour this year, due to the early rain in May. However, this has brought its challenges ie contending with fast growing weeds. Thankfully, the sun arrived to give a good summer. I have particularly enjoyed the beautiful scent this year from a very large white scented Cordyline Australis and the blue Wisteria. Also, a large brilliant red Tamarix located on the east side of the garden was looking stunning.

Despite the dry conditions, we have been planting in certain areas to enhance plantings schemes. Two areas were also reseeded with grass to give better visitor access. This included an area next to the renovated link bed and close to the Geddes Glasshouse. The whole area is now looking nicely established.

After the construction of the new path at the east side of the garden, I plan to tidy up this area after the road contractors have left. We will try to re-edge and sort out the Phormium plants to give a proper 'entrance look' to this area. I am also encouraging red Papaver poppies to spread around the toilet borders to give more interest to this building.

We have been busy with school trips and events this year and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves at all the various children activities and concerts held in the garden. The new wall and borders in front of the patio lifts this area, especially when the brass bands are playing.

Thanks go to my four volunteers who have been working their way through the maintenance work. It's much appreciated. Also a big thank you to the 'Friends Gardening Team' and to you for your continued support.

Michael Laird

SUMMER OUTINGS 2023

The committee is pleased at the continued enthusiasm of members wanting to go on the trips. Due to print deadlines, we will report on the last outing to Tarhill Lavender Farm in the Autumn.



May: Weymss Castle Gardens

Although overcast for most of the afternoon at Wemyss Castle, it didn't spoil the visit. We were welcomed by the owners themselves, Charlotte and Michael Wemyss, each in a golf buggy, waiting outside the castle. They whisked anyone in need of a lift to their huge (double) walled garden nearby.

There, we were given a brief talk, mentioning, in particular, the wonderful display of clematis, some of which were scented. They were flowering profusely, scrambling everywhere, over walls, up trees and shrubs. Charlotte believes that she probably has the unofficial national collection. Left to wander round, there was much to marvel

at, including, a Handkerchief Tree, perfect hostas, a pond full of huge carp, the ruined orangery, and numerous historic stone figures, reminders of the castle's history.

Michael and Charlotte joined us for tea and delicious cake in their poly tunnel before transporting us back to our bus.

Liz Taylor



June: Kellie Castle

After dodging major road works, we arrived at the medieval Kellie Castle in Fife, but it was hoods and umbrellas up as the rain began. After some initial booking hiccups, the Friends were able to see their choice of castle and/or garden.

Despite the wet, we explored the old walled garden. It was geometrically divided with an avenue of brilliant blue Nepeta, rose arches, ferns and Box edged borders. Astrantia major, Euphorbia 'Fireglow', Campanula lactiflora, giant Scabious and herbaceous geraniums were among many other plants on show. In the orderly vegetable beds grew brassicas, Artichoke, Fennel, onions and many varieties of Rhubarb. The wild flowers of Teasel, Red Campion and Ox-Eye Daisies mingled with garden plants.

The tour of the castle, the former second home of James Lorimer and his family, was excellent. The renovations and contents of the castle eg paintings, furniture, embroidery, wall hangings, sculptures etc, displayed and reflected the artistic talents and connections of the whole family. These included John Henry (artist); Robert (architect) and his son Hew (famous artist and sculptor); and Hannah (artist and craft person in many media):

Satisfied with our visit we strolled back to the coach and headed to Anstruther. The sun came out and many of us enjoyed a freshly cooked fish supper.

Godfrey Nicholson



Michael's gardening tip

- Mulches such as bark help retain moisture, inhibit weeds and protect the roots of plants through the winter.
- Add colour with berry bearing shrubs such as pyracantha and cotoneaster to give autumn and winter colour.

Michael Laird



Secret Gardens

Once again, we provided refreshments in the Rock Garden for the Broughty Ferry 'Secret Garden Trail', organised by Broughty in Bloom for Gala week.

The weather was excellent and we were kept extremely busy with visitors extolling the virtues of some of the gardens they had visited and in need of a cup of tea! Three of our members opened their gardens for the Trail this year. You can choose how many gardens you visit; they are all very different and I thoroughly recommend it.

Anne Hesketh



Band concert

The Band concerts in the Garden are organised by the Council. There is another one shortly and it's fingers crossed for the weather, especially with these short downpours we are currently experiencing. Hopefully, we get a good number in the audience again.



Friends Holiday 2024 Gardens of Cheshire

We can now confirm that a trip to RHS Bridgewater and the Gardens of Cheshire has been arranged from June 10th to 14th, 2024. We will be staying at the Best Western Forest Hills Hotel, Frodsham. The cost will be £559 (based on 25 passengers).

If you are interested, contact John or Kate Grocott on 779581, or email Kate at kathleengrocott@gmail.com for more information. Further details of the itinerary will also be available at the AGM.

Kate Grocott

Winter meetings

27th September 2023:

AGM with reports from John Grocott and Michael Laird. This will be followed by a power point show of our work and activities from throughout the year.

25th October 2023:

Subject: The Eden project (Dundee)
Speaker: Caishlan Sweeney

22nd November 2023:

Subject: The Whitehall Theatre - The Story So Far
Speaker: Graeme Smith

28th February 2024:

Subject: Wildlife of the Galapagos and Ecuador
Speaker: Jayne Ferguson

27th March 2024:

Subject: Growing up in New Zealand - A Maori view
Speaker: Ereti Mitchell (President of the New Zealand Society, Scotland)

All meetings to be held at Broughty Ferry Baptist Church, 86 St Vincent Street, Broughty Ferry, at 2.00pm.

Need to contact us?

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