



Friends of the
BARNHILL ROCK GARDEN

Spring Newsletter **2023**

From the Editor

I am currently catching up with recent progress in the Garden after a spell visiting family in Australia. The cold winter and occasional frozen ground seems not to have deterred the Monday Team who seem as enthusiastic as ever. Plans have also progressed with the summer trips and thoughts on any Gala consolidated. The 'Gala in the Garden' has normally been led and mainly funded by the Council. Hopefully this newsletter will keep you abreast with all these developments, as well as other news not reported since the last one in September.

Anne Hesketh



End of another Project? Not quite!

With the key parts of the 'Buckie project' finished a couple of years ago, ie the new buckie installed, pergola removed and patio relaid, we immediately set our sights on the surrounding areas to complete the rest.

Unfortunately, time and Covid were not on our side. First delays throughout lock down were followed by complications with the proposed contractor, along with builders generally experiencing material shortages and reluctant to embark on new projects. This

resulted in things taking a lot longer than we anticipated. In addition, during all of these processes, we realised that the steps were not only uneven, but also quite steep. This posed quite a safety problem that we were keen to address.

The wall was eventually completed by a local landscape gardener and this has added to the overall makeover of that area. It is excellent; it uses the original stones, cemented into place. We also engaged a local blacksmith to give us pointers on how a handrail

could be fitted without taking away the general look of the wall and surrounding areas and cope with the nearby rocks. This has now been completed and we are pleased with the result. However there is still some further work to be done. First we have decided to prolong the life of the wall by having some coping stones added. Then there will be the next stage of planting behind and in front of the new wall. By next season it should definitely be the end of another worthwhile and we hope appreciated project! ***Ann Taylor***

From the Chairman

After the storms of last winter, in late 2021 and early 22, this winter has so far been calmer. As I write this, the aconites and snowdrops are fully out and it seems that we are on course for an early Spring, after a relatively dry, mild winter.

Largely as a consequence of last year's hot, dry summer, we decided to replant the 'Heather Border' as it was looking very tired and leggy. The Monday team has also completed replanting the existing area called the 'Link Border', which is between the Geddes Glasshouse and the new Buckie. This was after spending many hours last summer getting rid of the 'Bishop's Weed'.

The committee is thinking ahead to a period of more Council cutbacks. Michael is only at the garden three days a week. We have in mind the repair of the water feature in the Garden. The ponds are of major importance and we have asked the Council for an estimate of the costs involved. At the moment the system is inoperable. Our thoughts have also turned to Gala in the Garden, normally held in July. The Council, although offering considerable guidance and equipment, has said that it needs to be community led. The committee have sadly decided that we are currently not in a position to organise, run and fund such a big event. This is extremely sad, as it was very popular in pre-Covid years.

Despite these looming problems, we have organised three summer outings in May, June and July. I am looking forward to them all. To judge from the numbers attending the afternoon talks, the switch from evenings is popular and we will continue with it. So, overall, this article has good news to report.

John Grocott



From the Gardening Team

The hardy group of volunteers meet regularly at 10 o'clock and carry out various jobs each Monday. Now, we have 14 or more people turning up and we are thinking that we need to order more mugs for the 11 o'clock break! We keep a record of volunteer hours in the Garden. This data is useful when making requests to the Council and impressing award judges!

Areas of work this winter have included the Link Border, the Heather Border and excavating and renovating part of the Scree Bed. We are also continuing work in the nursery area, adding plants to the Fernery and the beds around the Geddes Glasshouse.

Now that the handrail has been erected at the steps, the repaired wall is having coping added. With further planting, this will complete all the separate jobs related to the 'New Buckie' surrounds.

I am pleased to report that we have germinating 'Giant Himalayan Lilies' in the nursery and we are sowing seed (collected last autumn) for future years.



Hopefully, with the primulas we are bringing on, there will be a good display in the summer ahead. If Monday does not suit you, a smaller group meets from April to September, 10.00 - 12.00, coffee provided, to keep a check on young plants, watering etc.

John Grocott



From the Gardener

It is fantastic to see Crocus, Snowdrops and Winter Aconites popping up through the ground, showing signs of Spring. We have enjoyed a really mild winter, which has allowed us to achieve all the various jobs that need to be completed. We have been continually weeding and cutting back Herbaceous Perennials throughout the Garden, readying it for the new season.

In January we started our pruning programme, which included cutting back any trees and shrubs that required trimming. Then onto February we started mulching with manure, leaf mould and home made compost. We also decided to kerb edge the pavement, hoping to compliment the new road system. A few areas of grass will be reseeded, especially beside the newly reshaped border between the Buckie and the Geddes Glasshouse.

This year Iain Hunter celebrated 25 years of volunteering at the Garden. He is a fantastic help, assisting with the maintenance on a weekly basis. In recognition of his contribution over the years, the Friends presented him with a voucher.

Thank you for all your continued support.

Michael Laird



SUMMER OUTINGS 2023

Photograph © Ray Cox



Tuesday 23rd May 2023 - Wemyss Castle Gardens

Our first trip is on Tuesday 23rd May to Wemyss Castle Gardens. Though the garden has been in existence since the 17th Century, the walled garden had largely become unused. From 1993 Charlotte and Michael Wemyss have restored the six acre walled garden, as well as adding many interesting trees to the wild garden. There is also a large collection of clematis and roses.

We will leave at 1.00pm from opposite Broughty Ferry Library and travel to the gardens. We will have time to wander around and we will be given tea or coffee before leaving about 4.15pm to return to Dundee. The cost for the garden and the refreshments is £10.00 per person.

Photograph © Bactrianus Tripadvisor



Wednesday 28th June 2023 - Kellie Castle

Our second trip, is to the NTS Kellie Castle. This mediaeval castle was saved from ruin in the late 19th Century by the Lorimer family. There is the restored castle interior, an arts and crafts garden, as well as an interesting exhibition about the sculptor Hew Lorimer.

We will leave at 1.00pm from opposite Broughty Ferry Library. Entry to the castle and gardens is £9.50; entry to garden alone is £4.00. Individuals must decide

what they want to do, but National Trust members are free.

After spending two hours at the castle, we are going to Anstruther to the Fish and Chip shop. We are not able to book and so it is turn up and queue for our tea. Some lucky people might even manage a seat indoors. *However it is not compulsory to eat there!* We will depart from Anstruther about 6.00pm.

Photograph © <https://scottishlavenderrolls.com/>



Thursday 27th July 2023 - Tarhill Lavender Farm

Our last outing of the summer is to Tarhill Lavender Farm, where we can admire the lavender fields and see the process of turning the lavender into oil. Again, we leave opposite Broughty Ferry library at 1.00pm and travel to Tarhill. Entry is £7.00 per person. We then travel to the nearby Loch Leven's Larder for refreshments. We have reserved space and ordered tea/coffee, a small scone and a cake @ £7.00 per person.

Please advise of any dietary requirements in advance. There will then be a little time to admire Loch Leven and look round the shop. The Larder shuts at 5.30pm.

Michael's gardening tip

Feed shrubs and roses now with a good multi purpose fertilizer to achieve best results in the season ahead.
Michael Laird



Crathes in August

It was too late to report on our August trip in the last newsletter. Here is Godfrey's account of the visit.

After a circuitous journey via the scenic route (according to the driver!), the coach took us along the wooded drive to Crathes Castle. Some of the Friends chose to view the castle (optional) as well as the garden and, despite finding the three floors and many stairs a real challenge, enjoyed the 17th century ornate ceilings and finely carved furnishings. Below the imposing castle lay the garden set out in informal 'rooms' divided by a formal pattern of paths and eccentrically shaped Yew hedges. We admired the tremendous heights of

Inula magnificum, Cephalaria gigantea and Echium pininana, and the late summer flowers of Phlox paniculata, Rudbeckias and Eryngiums.

New features included a giant Dragonfly sculpture in the middle of the upper pond, and a fascinating, difficult to describe new garden 'room' near the Doocot. Edged with old logs and tree stumps and with three circles of granite sets, it was planted with moisture loving ferns, Astilbe and Mecanopsis, and dry loving succulents, grasses, and Cardoons.

It was then time to leave for home after a thoroughly stimulating and enjoyable visit for all.
Godfrey Nicholson



Award update

Once again the Friends have been awarded level 5, Outstanding, for their achievements in the It's Your Neighbourhood scheme (IYN). Dundee City Council organised an award ceremony in Baxter Park for Beautiful Scotland and IYN successful entrants. Godfrey Nicholson and Alan Leith accepted our certificates on behalf of the Friends.

In May, we received the 21/22 green flag which has been flying all summer. Currently, work is underway with the Council for the 22/23 submission.

Anne Hesketh



Stop Press!

- Have a look at the plant table, which is up and running for the summer. The Glasshouse and access to the table are 'open' when Michael or the Monday/Thursday teams are in 'residence'.
- Despite the problems with the pond system, frog spawn can now be seen.



Calendar of events

The Council is making arrangements for this year's summer programme of Sunday Band concerts, which will once again include the Barnhill Rock Garden and will be advertised via the Council's website and social media pages. This also applies to Ranger events. When the full details are available, we will email FBRG members and display the information in the Geddes.

Band Concerts (see above)

Activities for Children

June/July: Countryside Rangers; Title and exact dates tbc. See above.

Thursday 20th July: 11am - 11.30am
Stories for under 5s with Dundee Libraries

Thursday 27th July: 11am - 11.30am
Stories for under 5s with Dundee Libraries

Thursday 3rd August: 11am - 11.30am
Stories for under 5s with Dundee Libraries

Summer Outings (see previous page for details)

Tuesday 23rd May: Wemyss Castle Gardens

Wednesday 28th June: Kellie Castle

Thursday 27th July: Tarhill Lavender Farm

Need to contact us?

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