

Friends of the
BARNHILL ROCK GARDEN

Autumn Newsletter 2025

From the Editor Two major challenges for the Friends this summer have been the hot, dry weather and the popular water feature system in the garden. This newsletter describes our continued efforts at these challenges. It also gives insight into our programme of events for next season and a further chance to register for the Friends' 2026 holiday if you have not already done so, or were unaware of the planned trip.

Anne Hesketh

The Saga of 'The Water Feature'

Most visitors do not realise that there are several small ponds, three of which are large and topped up automatically or by hand, if needed. However, the rest are dry and limiting wildlife due to the water no longer being able to be pumped through the system. **Editor**

The pumps which control the water feature were switched off, as usual, at the beginning of winter in October 2019. Unfortunately, they were not able to go back on due to many extrinsic factors.

One of these factors was the installation of the new 'Buckie' which highlighted the poor state of the electrics. New electrics had to be fitted. Then Covid came along in 2020. All access to the gardens was denied and the pumps lay unattended. The system had shown that all wiring to the water feature piping was totally corroded and would need a total overhaul. Another blow to us all. At this stage, the project was still in the hands of the Council.

More bad news followed. Council funding dried up, but there was one glimmer of hope - a Nature Restoration Fund for the whole of the city for environmental projects. Again, we were subsequently scuppered - the Scottish Government decreed that this fund be used by all Councils to back up their well-publicised financial shortfalls.

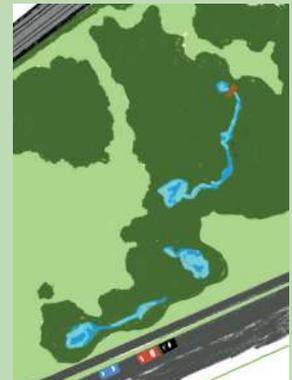
However, diagrams were drawn showing electrics and water pipe routes. The costs were extensive in

comparison with our 2019 thinking! In the meantime, Michael Laird had been topping up the main pond by hose, to allow the children some input into this popular wildlife area. Not a satisfactory solution, but a stop gap.

Numerous meetings with the Council produced suggestions for us to try local funding. So, the long process began, with a target of £20K. Today, with the plans having been changed and a few years down the line, we are pursuing the goal of getting this project completed. On the plus side a feature relating to the ponds - the wee bridge at the upper part of the ponds, has been replaced by the Friends and is ready for the water to flow under it.

So, with lots of effort, determination and numerous applications to local trusts, we have, to date, reached the princely sum of £13K. So, all I can say is 'Watch this space'!

Ann Taylor





From the Chairman

This will be my last Chairman's Report as I am stepping down at the September AGM and handing over the 'silver trowel' to Ann Taylor. However, I am retiring to the Nursery and hope still to be involved in the many and varied future activities of the Friends.

The extremely dry Winter and Spring has not made our gardening activities and planting efforts easy. We have had to water our new plantings regularly to keep the plants alive. I have mentioned before the importance of planting 'the right plant in the right place' and we can now see that our changing climate makes this more and more important. We have decided to carry out any new planting before Christmas in an attempt to get the plants established.

We have been putting a lot of effort into fund raising for the ponds and water feature re-instatement and have committed a substantial sum from our funds for this project. At the time of writing, we are hopeful of progress, but we wait for Council Officers to advise us further. However, I am very pleased to report that with the help of some anonymous donations, we have managed to get a new bridge built to replace the old decayed timber one. This means we will be able to cross the stream 'dry shod' when the water flows once more. We have to thank Ann Taylor for her unstinting efforts to get substantial funding towards a renovated water feature system and for the bridge.

John Grocott

From the Gardening Team

I am pleased to say that the Monday group continue to turn up in good numbers to help with the many and varied tasks in The Rock Garden. This includes weeding, planting, painting, tool maintenance and other general 'housekeeping tasks' for the garden. This year, looking after the areas of the garden that we maintain has been made difficult by the lack of rain, so watering has been a priority.

We continue to bring on plants in the nursery for planting in the garden, or for sale on the plant table. We are planning ahead for the Autumn and Winter jobs and, as always, work with Michael on any necessary improvements. *John Grocott*



From the Gardener

The extreme heat this year has not been kind to some of our plants. However, most of the plants have done remarkably well. Thankfully, the rain did make an appearance just in time, ensuring the garden stayed green. Once again, we have tried to maintain the garden ready for the various events and inspections throughout the year. Visitor numbers have been down this year due to the road closure, but I am sure it will bounce back when the road opens. People have, however, been asking about the tree felling. Pg 4 will give you the information.

In the spring, we sowed seeds in the green house to use in summer to help fill any empty spaces throughout the borders. These have been very handy in providing extra colour in several areas.

Personally, I have enjoyed looking at all the different shades of green and shapes of each plant throughout the year. I particularly enjoyed the yellows of the Tree Peonies, Tree Lupins, Verbascum which spread along the front, and currently the blue Agapanthus. Over the past few years, I have allowed poppies to spread naturally around the toilet building and they are now starting to make a good display in this area. The hot weather has helped to reduce weed growth which has allowed us to try to keep on top of the maintenance at times.

I am looking forward to getting on with all the Autumn/Winter jobs and projects to prepare the garden for the season ahead. Thank you for your continued support. It is much appreciated!!

Michael Laird



SUMMER OUTINGS 2025



May: Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh

We arrived just after a heavy shower of rain, then had a beautiful sunny day in Edinburgh Botanic Gardens. We were told that the Micanopsis were in full bloom and the display was beautiful. It was close to the Alpine area which was also vibrant with colour. Meandering paths and waterfalls running through the centre added to the atmosphere. There had been tree damage in the last storm, but many fine

specimens were still intact. The herbaceous border was densely packed, but still awaiting flowering and behind it was a kitchen and herb garden and orchard. Unfortunately, the greenhouses are in the process of reconstruction and maintenance, so perhaps a return visit would be in order once completed.

Marge Auras

June: Pitmuies Gardens, Guthrie, Angus

How is it possible that we have lived 28 minutes from Pitmuies Gardens, near Frickheim, for 48 years and never been till now? This was our first Rock Garden Trip why had we waited so long for that too? And what an initiation! Pitmuies has everything from a gorgeous cottage garden with hosts of Hollyhocks, Foxgloves, Iris and Campanula

wrapping around more formal terraces of roses; plus, historic stone buildings, a burn, bridge and Riverside Walk.

I really don't think my memory has been coloured by the huge strawberry tart devoured at Brechin Castle Garden Centre on our way home.

Von Day



July: Dunninald Castle Gardens, Montrose

On a dull but warm afternoon, we left Broughty Ferry for Dunninald Castle near Usan Village, Montrose. There was a large, walled garden with a profusion of colourful, herbaceous plants such as alliums, agapanthus, hostas and gigantic thistles which were beloved by the bees. There were also vegetables and fruit

which looked extremely large and healthy, despite the dry season. Many of us were content to just spend the time here, rather than explore the woodland path with other points of interest.

Coffee, tea and cake was enjoyed on the way home at the old Boatyard, Arbroath.

Kate Grocott



The Friends' Holiday 2026

The Scottish Borders

Sat. 23rd May to Wed. 27th May 2026



© Kathy Henry



There are still a few places left on the trip to the Scottish Borders next May (5 days, 4 nights, including dinner, bed and breakfast).

We are staying at the Waverley Castle Hotel in Melrose and visiting Kailzie Gardens, Dawyck Botanic Gardens, Stobo Japanese Garden and a few others.

The cost of the trip will be between £529.00 and £569 per person depending on how many people go on the holiday. A £50.00 deposit secures your place. Booking is done through Hays Travel Agency on Brook Street, Broughty Ferry.

For more information contact John or Kate Grocott on 01382 779581 or email Kate at kathleengrocott@gmail.com
Kathleen Grocott



The Trees!

I keep getting asked by the public 'What happened to the trees?'

After storm Gerrit, way back in December 2023, Network rail proceeded to inspect all the trees that could be a danger to the track. Once the inspection was completed, it was decided, in conjunction with the Council, to remove a number of trees for safety reasons. I am sure you'll agree safety first.

Michael Laird

Michael's gardening tip:

Take a small unused pot and fill it with straw, then balance it upside down on a stick or cane. This is a great way to stop bugs eating away at your flowers and leaves, especially if you are growing dahlias.



Winter meetings

24th September 2025

AGM with reports from Michael Laird and John Grocott

29th October 2025

Subject: 60 Acres Restored: the last 20 years of the garden at Teasses **Speaker:** Craig Cameron

26th November 2025

Subject: William Speirs Bruce: Polar Scientist
Speaker: Brian Carroll

25th February 2026

Subject: Child Poverty: Rosebank Primary School Action Plan **Speaker:** Jennifer Heffell

25th March 2026

Subject: Life in Spite of Everything: Tales from the Ukrainian East **Speaker:** Prof. Victoria Donovan

Note the change in venue! All meetings to be held at **The Brook, 343 Brook St, Broughty Ferry, DD5 2DS at 2.00pm.**

Need to contact us?

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