



Friends of the BARNHILL ROCK GARDEN

Spring Newsletter 2026

From the Editor

Despite all the gardening challenges over the last year with the weather and the water feature, this newsletter will give you our latest update and things to look forward to. We have the Friends' outings and their holiday, as well as plans to improve several areas in parts of the Garden. This includes further planting and looking at areas that suffered from the long dry summer. The Friends are as active as ever. **Anne Hesketh**



Water feature funding – we got there!

With our £13K from a combination of the Friends' not inconsiderable contribution and our successful grant applications, the amount required for the total overhaul of the system (the installation of new water pipes and electrics) has been reached. The work is finished, thanks to further monies granted to us from part of Dundee's allocation of Scotland's 'Nature Regeneration Fund'.

Editor



*“When all at once I saw a crowd,
a host, of golden daffodils...”*

Daffodils have been cheering the gloom of late Winter to Spring for millennia. England and Wales have their own native species, *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, while Scotland's are regarded as introduced. During the 19th century plant collecting era, species daffodils were collected from the Mediterranean regions and North Africa and hybridised into the divisions and varieties of today. These range from Trumpet Daffodils (varied forms) to dwarf Cyclamineus (swept back petals), and **Bulbocodium** (1) (with a 'hooped petticoat' flower).

All the photos above and below show a selection of varieties found in the Garden including the Miniatures '**Tete a Tete**'(2), '**Jack Snipe**'(3), and '**Jetfire**'(4); the Poeticus '**Pheasant's Eye**'(5), and the Double '**Rip van Winkle**'(6). After more daffodil planting last autumn, Spring 2026 should have a good show. Come and see what you can spot and be uplifted. **Godfrey Nicholson**





From the Chair

This has been my first 6 months in post and it has not been without lots of challenges. The Garden has never known so many storms, one after another. After consultation with the Council and Network Rail, this has resulted in more conifers being felled for safety reasons.



I am pleased to say that our long standing project, 'The Water Feature', has been completed, with a little money left in the pot. We have decided,

under advice, to have all the channel edges re pointed to fully complete the project, hopefully for many years to come.

We have finished our winter projects and started one which had been deferred due to consultations with the Council. This is the re-design of the heather border and involves positioning sleepers to provide a more stable, secure growing area for the heathers, especially the East side where replaced heathers suffered in the long, dry summer.

The seemingly constant wet weather has not been helpful, but we have begun to see 'the wood from the trees'. A little bit of drizzle does not seem to deter us. We have again been lucky to have leaves donated from St. Margaret's Church. This allows us to produce our own leaf mould, an asset for our borders.

Today aconites and snowdrops are peeping through and once again we are on 'The Snowdrop Trail'. I look forward to the next 6 months when the Garden springs into flower. I hope it brings everyone, like myself, the delight of a year to come.

Ann Taylor



From the Gardening Team

Our Monday group returned eager to get on with the work, even though the weather has been quite soggy. This was a very different picture from 2025 with the lack of rain over a long period.

We continue with the general maintenance of areas, although much ground work has been delayed due to frost. Thank goodness we did not have snow! Although the ground has been quite wet, I am pleased to say that does not seem to hamper the spirits of our group who appear ready to start our heather border project, work which had been deferred for a short time.

With Spring, our thoughts and work are also returning to adding more snowdrops to our snowdrop wood.

So, the chilling, soggy air does not seem to impede the Team's eagerness and the welcome coffee break allows us all to reflect on the new growing season.

Ann Taylor



From the Gardener..

who has now completed 25yrs of service in the Garden. Congratulations.

Where would the Garden be without you?

I write this article on the first day of sunshine. Thankfully the rain has now stopped at last. It's great to see the snowdrops, winter aconites and crocus starting to appear.

Once again, we carried out a programme of pruning to remove any dead or diseased branches and improve access where needed. Mulching jobs have been hindered by the rain, but it is hoped to complete this task very soon with a good mixture of leaf mould and our own compost. The continued rain has allowed us to do the usual cleaning activities to ensure everything is ready for the growing season.

I am delighted that the Garden is on the Scottish snowdrop festival which I hope will attract visitors in this less busy season. The Countryside Ranger has been along to do a bird box workshop using the kits that the Friends purchased. It was very well attended.

In April, we will ensure the water feature is cleared of any debris so it is ready to be switched on for everyone to enjoy again. It's fantastic to hear the water flowing once more. Thanks go to everyone who helped in this joint project between the Council and the Friends to restore it.

Seed sowing should start soon to help improve colour and interest in various areas. We have planted a selection of grasses (calamagrostis brachytricha) provided by the Council to brighten up a drab area near the back fence towards the water feature. Hopefully, this will make a difference. We also received new maps for each notice board to encourage visitors to navigate around less frequented parts of the Garden.

Once again thank you for your continued support!

Michael Laird



SUMMER OUTINGS 2026

ALL summer outings leave opposite Broughty Ferry library at 1.00pm

© Wormistoune Gardens



Wednesday 24th June 2026 - Wormistoune Gardens

Leaving Broughty Ferry at 1pm, we will drive to Wormistoune gardens on the eastern tip of Fife. Here, there is a walled garden which contains clipped yew hedges, herbaceous borders and a potager garden. Other highlights include water features, an intricate box parterre, a wildflower meadow,

a large landscaped pond and an extensive woodland area. On our return journey, we will stop off at the nearby Crail Golf Hotel, from where we can either walk around Crail or partake of tea / coffee and a scone in the hotel. We anticipate being back in Broughty Ferry around 6pm.

© Helensbank House



Tuesday 21st July - Helensbank House

Our July outing also leaves at 1pm, and is to Helensbank House near Kincardine. It has an 18th Century walled garden divided into garden 'rooms' featuring a blue and white cottage garden, an Italianate double courtyard with citrus trees, an 'exotics' courtyard, a formal garden for the national collection

of Portland roses, and a shaded walk with Japanese elements. An impressive feature is the 'notable' Cedar of Lebanon believed to have been planted in 1750 by the sea captain who built the house. Following our tour, we will have coffee / tea and scones before returning home by 6pm.

© Kirklands Gardens



Thursday 20th August - Kirklands Garden

At 1pm, we will leave Broughty Ferry and drive to Kirklands in Fife, a journey of approximately 1 hour 30 mins. The bus will stop in the square with a short walk to the gardens. The woodland garden comes to life in February and in Spring the rockery area has a wonderful display of flowering dwarf azaleas in various colours. The herbaceous borders peak in

late summer, with yellow rudbeckia, verbena and echinacea. There is also a walled garden with raised borders. The Saline Burn runs along the bottom of the garden with 20 acres of natural woodland. A pathway runs along the stream. Tea/coffee and scones will be provided. We expect to be back in Broughty Ferry at approximately 6pm.

Other outings

Several members of the Rock Garden went to a special opening of Branklyn Gardens during their Snowdrop Festival in February this year. If you missed it, there are other events in Perth that might also appeal to you.

Perth show:

18th April, 12 noon - 3.30
at North Inch Community Campus

Scone Palace Garden Fair:

29th & 30th May, 10am - 5pm





Remember this?

Despite lots of watering, these were plants in the scree bed which were barely hanging on last summer.

Now we have the opposite, with an unexpected pool appearing in one of the borders!



Michael's gardening tip

You can mulch your borders in early spring, provided the soil is moist. This will prevent weed growth in your border and vegetables beds. *Michael Laird*



Calendar of events

Although there are no scheduled band concerts, we are hopeful that the Dundee Instrumental Band will organise their own one with the Council, as last year.

Currently, there are no further Ranger events.

Any events in the Rock Garden will be advertised through posters in the Garden and through emails to the Friends.

All Council run events will be on their website.

Story telling in the Rock Garden with Dundee libraries

These will be from 11am to 11.30am (if bad weather, in the Geddes Glasshouse).

Tuesday 28th July

Tuesday 4th August

Tuesday 11th August

Summer Outings (see previous page for details)

Wednesday 24th June: Wormistoun Garden, nr Crail

Tuesday 21st July: Helensbank House, Kincardine

Thursday 20th August: Kirklands Garden, Saline, Fife

Friends' summer holiday

Sat 23 – Wed 27 May: Scottish Borders

It is still possible to sign up for the holiday. Bookings can be made at Hays Travel in Broughty Ferry. For general information contact Kate Grocott on 01382 779581.

STOP

Stop Press!

The plant table is up and running for the summer.

Need to contact us?

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