



## From the Editor

“What’s happened to our newsletter?”, I hear you say. Apologies if you don’t like change but I think you will agree Isobel Turner, the previous editor, is due a big thank you and a well earned retirement from the document. With the help of Jen Petrie on the PC, Isobel instigated the newsletter 17 years ago. So what is my role? Certainly it’s not my computer/design skills (the printer has done a great job tidying up my efforts). Apart from compressing lengthy reports from contributors I am trying to give you a flavour and arouse your interest in the many activities in which the Friends have been involved throughout the summer. There was plenty to report on this season, so read on.

**Anne Hesketh**

# 60th Anniversary Gala in the Garden

After months of preparation by the Dundee City Council and the Friends of the Barnhill Rock Garden, on Saturday, 11th July 2015 an unforgettable party was held in the Barnhill Rock Garden to celebrate its 60th Anniversary. During the opening ceremony conducted by the Environment Convener the Friends gave gifts of £60 each to two of the Garden’s voluntary helpers, Iain Hunter and Ian Baxby who



between them have worked in the Garden for more than 30 years. In addition a donation of £600 was given to Broughty Ferry in Bloom to help them with their efforts to improve the Broughty Ferry environment. Later the Friends’ first chairman, Isobel Turner, cut a specially made birthday cake.

I had the joy of unveiling a delightful birdbath commissioned by the Friends from Jennifer Rae, a clay modeller, artist and ceramist from Cupar in Fife.



Entertainment at the Gala included entertainer “Talented Ted” who made balloon animals for a never-ending queue of children; a storyteller, the Play on Wheels Play Bus; Dance Ihayami; The Swizzle Sisters; Dundee Instrumental Band; 6th/8th Boys Brigade Pipe Band; Snag Golf; a small putting green; The Countryside Rangers; Face painting by Dirti Faces and Brae Riding Stables’ pony.

A record number of plant stalls and charity groups took part and a warm sunny day encouraged a large number of adults and children to take part and enjoy a great afternoon.

**Mary Saunders**

## From the Chairman

Following the resignations of Isobel Turner and Tom Neilson from the Committee we are making a few changes to the committee members' various responsibilities. We have invited Moira Bisset and Godfrey Nicholson to join us and look forward to their input to our future discussions. As most of you are aware Isobel was one of the founding members of the Friends, spending ten years as Chairman but feels it is now time to step down. We and the Garden owe her a lot. She will still be taking a great interest in the Friends and in particular in the Rock Garden. Tom is moving to England to be closer to his family following the loss of his wife, Myrna, and we wish him well.

This has been a busy six months culminating in three assessments of our work by Scotland in Bloom, It's Your Neighbourhood and Britain in Bloom judges after the 60th Anniversary Gala. We have also just heard that we have been awarded a Green Flag for 2015-2016.

Ann Taylor has been busy arranging a varied and interesting programme for our winter meetings. As usual Daphne Barbieri will be showing a film at our AGM which this year will cover the away trip to Yorkshire.

Thank you for your continued support of the Barnhill Rock Garden which is increasingly important in the present financial climate.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at the winter meetings.

**Mary Saunders**

## From the Gardener

Hello again. Your garden has given a fantastic display this past year despite the showery weather. The Boys and I have been getting the garden ready for all the various inspections and events. The two new areas that have been planted up in the spring are doing well. As well as maintaining the garden, any plants we have bought or produced out of the nursery have been used throughout the garden. We are also about to start clearing out water features 1 and 2. I am looking forward to getting stuck into the new project with the Friends which will start in the Autumn. We are away to renovate a large border over the next two years. Thank you for your continued support.

**Michael Laird**

**STOP**

**Stop Press!**

### Autumn Clean up

Saturday 10th October from 10 am to 1 pm with a coffee break. Come for as long or short a time as suits you. Many hands make light work and yours would be appreciated.

## From the Gardening Team

The team meet on Monday mornings from 10 to 12 with a coffee break. We continue to look after 'our areas' and are pleased that the primula area near the patio looks good as we raised the primulas ourselves from seed.

In the Helen Fleming bed most of the 234 plants are doing well and we are able to take cuttings from them. The next big project is the renovation of another bed in the garden. The Council has agreed to supply topsoil, compost etc. The Friends will source and buy plants and replant the bed.

Thursday morning watering is carried out in the 'warm months' by a small group. The idea is to keep things going in the Nursery and Geddes area and to stop things drying out! (Some chance)

A few more volunteers would be extremely welcome especially to help with administrative tasks, label making etc. Help does not have to be given on Monday and Thursday mornings and it does not have to involve weeding and watering.

**John Grocott**

### Michael's gardening tip

If you have problems with slugs round your plants, you can use Slug Gone wool pellets, an organic alternative to the usual blue slug pellets.

This is a natural barrier which deters slugs from your plants.



## SUMMER OUTINGS 2015

### **May: The Kelpies at the Helix Park nr Falkirk**

The two Kelpies, called 'Duke' and 'Baron', are 330 metres high. They were inspired by water horses initially, but subsequently by Clydesdale horses which were used in the area. Both Kelpies are impressive to see – they are made of stainless steel panels of varying sizes and fitted together like a jigsaw. Over 600 people were employed in the construction, from artists and technicians to the 'tea boy'. Finally, a late lunch in the Westfield Cafe at Falkirk Football club was enjoyed by all.



### **June: Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh**



Before leaving the coach we were advised to go and see a 'smelly' plant (Titan arum, *Amorphophallus titanum*), even though it would be a few days before it flowered (it smells only when it flowers). On reaching the glasshouse we were met with a board telling us to come and see 'New Reekie in Auld Reekie'. 'New Reekie' is massive and is grown from a gigantic corm. The plant originally came from Sumatra, but the one in Edinburgh came directly from a Botanic garden in Germany about 12 years ago.

### **July: House of Dun near Montrose**

During the visit we were able to see the lovely walled garden and we were given a tour of the house. The Erskine family, owners of the Estates of Dun since 1393, lived in the castle for about 300 years. The present House of Dun, designed by the architect William Adam, is dated from 1730. Augusta, who married into the Erskine family, was a daughter of King William IV and a keen gardener.

The House contains paintings of the Erskine family. Also included in the artwork is a painting of King William IV's illegitimate children. Our guide informed us that David Cameron could have been descended from one of them! Since 1980 the house has been owned by the National Trust. After our visit, we had a tasty High Tea at the Park Hotel, Montrose.

**Anne Chalmers**



## Away trip to Yorkshire

Twenty-four Friends, including myself on my first garden holiday trip, set off on a 4 day tour of Yorkshire gardens. The first stop was Manor House in Whalton, Northumberland. The best time to see this garden is when the roses are in bloom. Nevertheless a beautiful wisteria was in bloom on the front of the house and there was an unusual planting of large grey/green hostas with alliums popping through in a large circular bed.

We received a warm welcome at our comfortable hotel, Aldwark Manor Hotel in the Vale of York. We mixed and matched at meal times which was a good way to make new friends with other Rock Garden members.

On Tuesday we visited Stillingfleet Lodge garden and nursery, Boundary Cottage, a private garden which holds a National Collection of Dicentra and Linden Cottage, a newer garden, where various statues were placed in the formal areas to add interest.

On Wednesday we moved eastwards to the "Wolds". The views were stunning as we looked back over the Vale of York. We first visited Rowela Cottage, a private garden of 3/4 acres sculpted from a wild overgrown paddock. The garden flowed from area to area with weaving paths, a sunken garden; a large figure of eight pond teaming with Koi Carp and a Japanese bridge spanning the centre. The owner is a Heuchera specialist, having 140 different varieties of these plants.

*(cont'd)*

## Away trip to Yorkshire (cont'd)

We travelled on towards the coast to Burton Agnes Hall, a large manor house built in 1173. The beautiful award winning gardens featured an extensive and amazing walled garden containing over 400 plant species. As well as being colourful and packed with plants, it had various garden rooms, planted in varying colours. The house was open for visitors. We all felt we could have spent longer here. Our last garden of the day was Breezy Knees Nursery and garden. The garden was huge, 15 acres in all, and we certainly needed the maps we were given to find our way round. The main feature was a 250ft herbaceous border.

The following day we checked out of the hotel and departed for the Manor House and Garden at Heslington, near York, the home of internationally acclaimed flower arrangement artist George Smith MBE. He welcomed us to his garden as we entered into a stunning formal area at the side of the house.

It was beautifully manicured, with lots of colour and unusual features. The garden is noted for its collection of roses, irises, poppies and a wide variety of foliage plants including hostas, ferns and ornamental grasses. Rhododendrons, alliums and primula candelabra were in flower around



the ponds. The garden was a delight to wander through, with cobbled courtyards, island beds, grassy paths, a warm Mediterranean area, and lovely use of climbing plants to soften walls. We could have happily stayed longer but it was time to head home. It had been a really good trip, but tinged with sadness at the end because of the loss of our friend John Symington. He will be sadly missed.

*Marge Auras*

## Winter meetings

### September 23rd 2015

AGM followed by a film by Daphne Barbieri of the away trip to the 'Private Gardens of Yorkshire'

### October 28th 2015

Prof. Hugh Begg. "A Walk along the Esplanade to the Barnhill Rock Garden."

### November 25th 2015

Evergreen Nurseries, The Murroes. "The Running of a Garden Nursery".

### February 24th 2016

Mr Ian Christie. "Our Garden - 35 years on - and still learning"

### March 23rd 2016

Dr Christopher Connelly, Research Fellow Dundee School of Medicine. "Bee Research breakthrough."

*All meetings held at St Aidan's Centre, Brook Street, Broughty Ferry, Wednesdays at 7.30pm*

## Need to contact us

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