



# *Friends of Valley Gardens*

Spring News Letter 2012

## *Welcome....*

Firstly, the committee would like to extend a sincere thank you to each and every one of the FOVG members; unbelievably the total membership has now pushed over the 200 mark - a 100% increase on last spring's total - we would like to stress that we value every single one of our members equally, and going forward hope that we can keep growing as a charitable organisation.

With summer fast approaching it's time to have a quick re-cap of the last few months, and also take a look at our prospective plans for the season. We ask that all of our members read this with their thinking caps on, what could you contribute to help make this the most successful fundraising period in the group's history? If you have any 'eureka' moments then please write to our secretary: Helen McCallum 54 Swinton Court, Harrogate HG2 0BB or by email to [helenm534@aol.com](mailto:helenm534@aol.com).

## *Since the last time:*

It gives us great pleasure to announce that the brand-new castle in the children's play area has been officially opened. The more sharp-eyed of readers may spot some FOVG representatives in this picture...



The FOVG's second **Fish and Chips Quiz Night** was held on Saturday 26th Nov at the Harlow Hill Club. With tickets a steal at £10 per person (and some generous donations made), the night raised a total of £456. Drakes on Knaresborough Road can take credit for the delicious fish and chips, lovely! Big thanks to Helen for all her hard work and organisation.

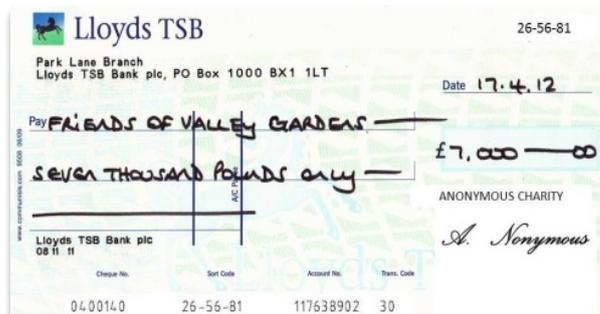
With Christmas shoppers bustling around town and that sense of Christmas cheer in the air our Chairman Jane managed to secure our first **Marks and Spencer Bag Packing event**. I must admit it sent shivers down most of our hardy member's spines- the idea of packing shoppers personal wares with a 'cheery' smile. It even drove our trusty Vice Chair into 'decorating' the Mag Well for Santa, and our Volunteer Gardening Coordinator into 'lending a hand'. Never-the-less Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December saw a massive £720 raised for FOVG with an additional £180 (20% of the collection) to M & S charity, Children's Heart Surgery. The bag packing day is always a terrifying proposition but never fails to produce results, a bit like an Alfred Hitchcock film!

The week leading up to Christmas is always a magical and unpredictable time of year, and with that lovely December bite in the air, it was FOVG's pleasure to accept an impromptu request from **Father Christmas to set up his grotto in the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room Building**. Accompanied by Rudolph and Rosie (a real life elf with a qualification in crowd control), Father

Christmas greeted the children in the Mag Well building to receive Christmas lists, have one-on-one chats and also give them each a mystery present. The day was a resounding last-minute success, so much so that Santa has proposed a two weekend residency next year for the 15/16 and the 22/23 of December, needless to say, FOVG were happy to accept!

St Patrick's Day was the perfect occasion for the inaugural **Pie and Peas Night** at the Harlow Hill Club. Hosted by Harrogate's very own Bruce Forsyth, Tim Paul. The night was a triumph, with FOVG members paying their respects to St Paddy in style. The proceedings got under way with a nicely balanced pub quiz that kept everybody interested; the music round in particular spanning the generations, with tracks from Jerry Lee Lewis, Billy Ocean and Katy Perry. Everyone agreed that the pies - courtesy of Woods' on Kings Road - were scrumptious, emphasised by the lack of leftovers at the end! The night was rounded off with Sir Bruce's trademark game 'play your cards right' for a £100 cash prize, although Sir Bruce looked terrified when one guest came dangerously close to scooping the award! All in all a fantastic evening that raised £270 for the Mag Well project. Another big thanks to Helen for all her hard work.

**Magnesia Well feature inside Yorkshire Life.** April's edition of local magazine 'Yorkshire Life' featured a full page spread on our Magnesia Well Pump Room project, written by future Private Eye columnist, Liam Clarke. Thank you to Paula Laker and Jo Haywood from the magazine, we are sincerely grateful for your continued support. Finally, it is with great pleasure that we announce that a benefactor (who would like to remain anonymous), has donated a very generous sum towards the project £7000. You know who you are, and from all our members thank you so much. In addition, Paula has informed us that the article also features in 'Harrogate Life'- a free supplement now in circulation. Let us hope we can gain further interest, fingers crossed.



**Yorkshire Garden Trust Award.** Coinciding with the Yorkshire Life release, an application was made by Jane to the aforementioned Yorkshire Garden trust. An appointment was made and the trustees met Jane and our very own Volunteer Gardening Coordinator Tony Sissons. Our pack of hungry fund raisers guided the trustees around the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room grounds answering all their tough questions and supplying them with refreshments. The sniff of a donation always brings out the competitive streak in our committee members, and after spending weeks on tenterhooks Jane eventually received notice of a £1,000 grant to FOVG. We thank Jane, Tony Sissons and our Volunteer Gardeners, whose hard work was noted in the assessment for the award.

**The sequel! Voluntary M&S Bag-Packing part II:** I know, it is starting to sound like a horror movie, but our ever enthusiastic Chairman managed to pull it off once again. Over the May bank holiday weekend the Marks and Spencer's bag-packing day was a great success for a second time. Once again there was a special effort made by our volunteer members, some even brought along friends and family to help too, over £600 was raised throughout the day! A magnificent effort. Once again a massive thank you to all our volunteers. *Will there be M&S Bag-Packing III? See Jane.*

To celebrate the **Queens Diamond Jubilee**: Over the May bank holiday weekend a young sculptor named Jonathon Sherwood used his remarkable talents to create his own unique celebratory gift. It proved to be quite a show as Harrogate's very own Edward Scissor Hands transformed tree trunk into the Queen's throne. The throne was carved on site and everybody enjoyed a unique bit of live art. Please feel free to check out his work on our website. You will find a link on our friends page.

### ***Here and Now:***

The **FOVG Volunteer Gardening Group**, lead by green-fingered botanical enthusiast Tony Sissons, continue to meet every-other Wednesday to help uphold the splendour of the gardens. In economic times such as these, the volunteer group play a pivotal role in helping the gardeners keep such consistently high standards. Unfortunately, numbers aren't always too high, but with the summer rays just round the corner who wouldn't want to spend their Wednesday's in such picturesque surroundings? If you are interested in helping out then please contact Tony at [tony@sissons.demon.co.uk](mailto:tony@sissons.demon.co.uk).

We are delighted to announce that this spring and summer, the fabulous bandstand in the valley gardens is due to see more musical action than it has in years. The bands commence on 6 May and are continuing on 2/3/4/5 June (Jubilee Weekend), 17/24 June. And then every single Sunday though July and August. Bring a picnic and enjoy the music. The bandstand should once again become a focal point in the gardens and a big lure to people from inside (and outside) of town. See our FOVG website for details.

### ***Coming up:***

On Sunday May 13<sup>th</sup>, come and join in the **Jubilee 'Party in the Park'** run by North Yorkshire West Girl Guiding. The Mag Well Building will be opened up by Vice Chair and Secretary with an enlightening historical guide detailing the buildings past and future. The event takes place 2 – 4:30 pm. In the park there will be stalls of local groups and charities. There will be an afternoon of live music publicised and hosted by Stray FM.

**THE BIG ONE** On Sunday June 10th the Valley Gardens will travel back in time to the 1940's for the FOVG's flagship event the '**1940's Open day**'. The day is already taking shape with a jam-packed agenda:

**On the Bandstand:** 'Echo Four Two Big Band' – an 18 piece big band playing Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Count Basie and all the popular music from the 40's ([www.echo42.co.uk](http://www.echo42.co.uk).) Firefly – a swing vocal/musical quartet ([www.fireflymusic.org](http://www.fireflymusic.org)). Maria Manchester - 40's sweetheart singer, singing all the wartime classics (Maria highlights can be found on YouTube). Cadenza – a close harmony group of 12 singers. We are also delighted to announce that Harrogate Theatre will be showcasing their main choir, and the Harrogate Youth Theatre will be performing a special '40's Olympic' show in light of the London games this summer. Still more acts to be confirmed. The **40's vehicle procession** will no doubt prove to be a great spectacle once again this year, for more information please contact Simon Roberts: [simon.off.road@ntlworld.com](mailto:simon.off.road@ntlworld.com) There are also still **stands available for hire**, (obtainable on a first come first serve basis). £40 for commercial and £10 for voluntary groups, for information regarding stand hire please contact Jane Blayney: [jane.blayney23@gmail.com](mailto:jane.blayney23@gmail.com).

On July the 8th, the Valley Gardens will welcome crowds en masse for the 2012 **Big Picnic**. Last Year the event was very advantageous to FOVG in that it was a great occasion to promote the charity and the Mag Well project, as well as to attract new members. Let's keep our fingers crossed for another glorious summer's day like last year. Again, we will be opening up the Mag Well building for visitors to view our plans.

**National Play Day** on August 1<sup>st</sup>. With locations spanning across Harrogate, the Valley Gardens will open its gates for National Play Day. It was said last year that the event could be better used as a spring board to promote the FOVG charity, are any of our members part of Amateur Dramatics groups who could get involved, or could we use the Well as a location?

**Open Garden** with afternoon tea. Once again Pat Clarke will be opening her garden to the public to raise funds for the OMWPR project. Pat is opening her Daily Mail Garden of the Year with its wonderful showing of Phloxes on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> August. Last year Pat managed to raise a fantastic £212, let's hope for another great turn out. Big thanks to Pat. Location: The Mews Cottage, 1 Brunswick Drive, Harrogate, HG1 2PZ. Admission including refreshment £5. Opening time 2pm – 5pm.

FOVG will be using the **Heritage Open Day** to boast its own unique piece of history - The Magnesia Well - on the 7<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of September (between 11:00–15:00). Last year the committee opened the Mag Well over a three day period and attracted in excess of 500 visitors, providing excellent presentations on the spa heritage of Harrogate, and the history of the building. Let's hope this year proves as successful, we are both delighted and proud to have had the Well selected by the Heritage Association again, giving the Well the publicity it deserves.

FOVG will be returning to their home-from-home, the Harlow Hill (Or is it Buena Vista Social) Club for our first '**Race Night**', on Saturday 15 September. With the first race getting underway at 19:30, the club will be transformed into the members lounge at Ascot for one night only. This is going to be another great social evening and an opportunity for our members to raise some money. We would like to stress that it really is a case of 'the more the merrier' on nights such as these, members and non members are all welcome, and all the money raised is all going to the OMPWR project. The night will cost £10 which includes supper and entry into all the races, more details to follow.

FOVG President Martin Fish the North of England Horticultural Society Show Director will be holding **Gardeners Question Time** on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September in the beautiful Valley Gardens Sun Pavilion. Please make a note of all the problems you come across in your own gardens and use this night to get all the answers from Martin. I think everyone will join me in saying a big thank you to Martin for pulling some garden strings to secure this venue. Admission £6, doors will open around 7pm; look out for further details later in the year.

## ***Finally,***

A special thank you to Roy Hampson for sending a brilliant collection of Valley Gardens photographs for the website, to have a look at Roy's snaps please look on the FOVG website [www.friendsofvalleygardens.co.uk](http://www.friendsofvalleygardens.co.uk) . Alternatively, you can join our Facebook page and see all the photos on there.

To join the FOVG Facebook page please search 'Friends of Valley Gardens' on Facebook and then click and 'like' our community page. We're currently trying to raise our profile using social media platforms so the more coverage we get the better.

Kind regards

Liam Clarke, Marketing and Publicity Officer