



Friends of Valley Gardens "Harrogate"
Harrogate's Award-Winning Park
Charity No: 1148369



President: Martin Fish

FOVG Newsletter

SPRING 2014

Welcome to the FOVG NEWSLETTER – especially to new Friends. Much has occurred since the last edition, including the issue of several “Newsflashes”. Although regular visitors to the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room site will be aware of progress, this edition will update others on some important aspects of FOVG activities. It is emailed to those members whose email addresses we have and posted to those who have not yet provided theirs. Extra copies are available. Attention is drawn to the FOVG website – www.friendsofvalleygardens.co.uk where a wealth of information on current activities as well as on the Valley Gardens and beyond will be found. We are indebted to Tom Holleman for his attention to this.

Old Magnesia Well Pump Room

Progress continues to be made on the restoration of this iconic building and its conversion into an information and education centre, the focal point of activities to date. Following roof restoration, installation and painting of the barge boards and guttering, re-pointing, re-positioning of the fall pipes and the addition of four bollards, the area round the building was paved in reclaimed high quality York stone. Algae on the stonework has been removed. Security lights have been installed and see-through armoured poly-carbonate sheets permanently placed to protect each window. We currently await the return of the original windows, repaired and re-glazed. Special mention must be made of Robert Grange whose expertise and practical help have considerably facilitated this work. Internally, work has begun with positioning the electrical wiring needed and restoring and painting or stripping the woodwork will soon commence. In order to create a display that echoes the only surviving information we have of the inside of the building as it was at the height of its popularity, it is intended to install a stove and hand pump/draining board unit. Benching, storage capacity, displays, lighting and, finally, a floor and disabled access facility will be added, as funds permit. **AN APPEAL:** A cast iron stove, hand pump, large wood saw, statue of Hygeia and other objects, pictures etc. associated with Harrogate's spa heritage are needed for display. Offers will be gratefully considered. Contact Jane Blayney 01423 505231.

The Rockery

Hidden under dense vegetation and a dilapidated rockery was a defunct 2,000 gallon water storage tank, possibly constructed around the time when the magnesia water was diverted from the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room to what is now the Magnesia Well Café. This was revealed once preparatory work had started on the rockery restoration. The area has been cleared and drained and large quantities of boulders, and sand and gravel mixed with the soil, have been employed to re-create this feature. A comprehensive re-planting plan has been produced and work on this will start when the weather improves. Jenny Travena, Liz Chidwell and Jane Blayney have spent many hours planning and steering through the work to date as well as devising the types and positions of the most appropriate plants for both the Rockery and the Sensory Garden (see below).

The New Path

The next development will be the laying of a path to the south of the rockery, which will encircle the Sensory Garden. The existing path from the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room southwards to the main path running from the Pinewoods to the fountain will also be resurfaced and widened.

The Sensory Garden

Attention has recently been focused on the content of the Sensory Garden to be created to the south of the Rockery. It is intended that it will be sympathetically stocked with plants that stimulate all the senses in order to enhance the attraction of the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room for all. On completion, it is anticipated that it will look, smell, feel and sound stunning – sorry, no tasting allowed!

Trees

A programme of tree felling is being undertaken in order to permit satisfactory cultivation of the area around the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room, protect the building, create a number of sightlines and improve security.

Fundraising 2013

Never far from the thoughts of those involved is the need to raise the funds to complete the project. Whilst the Friends have received valuable practical help with drainage and tree felling from Harrogate Borough Council, effectively, all materials and other labour have to be funded by FOVG. Last year the magnificent sum of over £24,000 was raised, bringing the total to £58,000 towards our target of (now) £75,000. We still need to raise an estimated £17,000. Spare a thought for Jane Blayney as she completes one funding application after another. Jane managed to secure a fantastic £14,000 last year from grants and events planning.

1940s OPEN DAY

For the last three years this event has drawn increasing numbers of people. Last year Harrogate Borough Council recorded over 20,000 visitors to the Valley Gardens on the day and the 1940s Open Day is clearly becoming increasingly important to the town's attraction as well as being FOVG's premier fundraising effort. The Yorkshire Building Society will run the popular cake stall and the Harrogate Mumblers the tombola. The food stalls are to be contracted out. A souvenir programme is being produced and advertising space is available to purchase. There are still some stands available for hire. Extra pairs of hands are needed on the day. Please volunteer to help, or you can simply come along, preferably in 1940s attire, and enjoy the day. This year Kim Wilson and Jon Collins are the organisers, assisted by Simon Roberts (Military Vehicles and Re-enactments), Helen McCallum (Bandstand and Attractions) and other members. Contact Kim on 01423 561618 or Jon on 07944 693406.

ANOTHER APPEAL: Besides help, cakes and tombola prizes are needed.

Awards 2013

The Duke of York's Community Innovation Award (+ £1,000).

Yorkshire in Bloom "It's Your Neighbourhood" category – "Outstanding".

The Mayor's Trophy awarded to Tony Sissons for services to the Valley Gardens.

The Larchfield Manor Trophy to the Volunteer Gardeners.

FOVG's Partners

It will be clear that literally thousands of man-hours have been put in by many Friends to achieve where we are now with the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room project. This would not have been possible without the constant cooperation, help and advice from individual members of Harrogate Borough Council. Trish McLaughlin and Mark Coston have been our long-suffering and stalwart Clerks of Works. Their precious time has been greatly appreciated. Records would be incomplete without a mention too of Mike Middleton HBC Events Officer, Wayne Trott HBC Projects Officer, Engineering, Head Gardener Simon Collier, Historian Malcolm Neesam, Photographer and Journalist, Roy Hampson, Garden Designer Jo Makin, Band Leader and Sales and Marketing Consultant Paul Mayo, Amanda Wilkinson of Hales Bar and our sponsor, Simon Roberts of Newnham Street Garage. Thanks to all.

Membership

FINAL APPEAL: FOVG spends into three figures on postage annually. This is money that has to be raised to replace itself and is largely because we post hard copies of notices to Friends who are either not on email or who have chosen not to provide their email address. Please let us have your email address or even an email address through which you may be contacted, that of a friend or relative. Emailing is quicker, more reliable and, above all, cost free.

Are you up to date with your subscription? This is now £10 per individual or £15 for a family. Please make sure you have paid, preferably by Standing Order and Gift Aided. Ask Jon Collins for a form on 07944 693406.

Please ask your friends and neighbours to become a "Friend". Your membership is important whether you can participate directly or not. Our membership numbers illustrate community support, which, in turn, helps us in our applications for grants and in our requests for improvements to the Gardens. Also by joining they will contribute to the completion of the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room restoration project and support this magnificent park in many other ways. And if they would like to become directly involved, there are many different opportunities.

.....and finally. A special thank-you to all Friends who have helped with fundraising events and made their own contributions towards the achievement of the vision of a restored and operational Old Magnesia Well Pump Room.

Chairman: Jane Blayney (01423) 505231, Vice-Chairman: Neil Hughes (01423) 504390

Treasurer: Anne Grange (01423) 522720

Secretary: Peter Blayney (01423) 505231, Marketing/Publicity Officer: Kim Wilson 01423 561618

www.friendsofvalleygardens.co.uk