



FRIENDS OF VALLEY GARDENS, HARROGATE

Charity No: 1148369



FOVG NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2014

For those whose travels do not extend to the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room, the most obvious change has been the completion of the reconstruction of the Rock Garden over the reservoir and the addition of a Sensory Garden, of which more below.

Though this is not strictly "news", having been reported in our Spring edition, it is appropriate that space is afforded to Liz Chidlow's detailed account of how the new Rock Garden came into being – Peter Blayney, Editor.

ROCK GARDEN

It began with a camera, measuring stick and soil meter and an investigation into the heritage of the original 1906 Edwardian rock garden and Victorian water system. It was not possible to pin the rock garden down to a "James Backhouse of York original", but, armed with local knowledge and expert guidance, an artist's impression of a design emerged.

Harrogate Borough Council's gravediggers were first on site last November, peeling off the soil and rocks from the old rockery to reveal the secrets of the brick "pillbox" reservoir and chambers beneath. They dug deeper to create a trench which they filled with gravel to improve the drainage. In the New Year the Council's tree team cleared some trees and shrubs to provide the open aspect needed for the rock garden and create views. Ten tons of reclaimed millstone grit rocks were delivered from a local stone yard in colours to match the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room.

In February local contractors assisted in the construction of the rock garden. Over 30 tons of grit sand and gravel were mixed with the soil using a digger bucket and skilfully placed over the reservoir to create the firm shape of the rock garden. Rocks were chosen one by one, swung into place with the digger bucket and sling, positioned carefully and dug deep into the ground with a rubber hammer.

The rock garden was left to compact while attention was given to the planting plan with the aid of books, a visit to Harlow Carr Gardens for inspiration and trips to specialist alpine nurseries for further advice. A large chart of the plants emerged complete with information about colour, flowering time, preferred aspect and ground conditions and their country of origin. It included dwarf conifers, alpine shrubs, creeping plants and those which formed rosettes, leafy ferns and more. Following this, visits were made to nurseries in Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cumbria to buy the plants.

With help from HBC's Head Gardener, Simon Collier, the rock garden was topped up with extra soil and the site dug over. The plants were positioned according to the plan and gravel was spread around them. It was June!

SENSORY GARDEN

The Sensory Garden was built to the south of the Rock Garden and is designed for the benefit of people with impaired senses. It contains plants that stimulate the senses – visual, sound, smell, touch and taste. A person with impaired vision may appreciate the sound of rustling grasses such as *Calamagrostis x actutiflora* "Karl Foerster", the nutty smell of *Filipendula Ulmaria* (Meadowsweet), the taste of *Origanum Vulgare* "Aureum" or the feel of *Stachys Byzantine* (Lanata), "Lamb's Ear" Silver Carpet (Woundwort) with its silver felted narrow leaves.

The boggy, acid soil was prepared with the help of several enthusiastic volunteers, Trish McLaughlin, HBC Clerk of Works, Simon Collier, HBC Head Gardener and his team, and the locally-sourced and selected plants were carefully positioned to reveal a much needed and admired Sensory Garden, surrounded by wheelchair and pushchair-friendly pathways, that will be appreciated by all, especially the elderly.

ANNE'S ANGLE

FOVG Treasurer, Anne Grange writes to say that enough money has been received to cover the costs of the 1940s Open Day, even if 29 June is a total wash-out. Much hard work has been done to secure sufficient advertisers to cover the cost of printing a new souvenir programme compiled by Paul Mayo, Echo 4 2's Bandmaster. All proceeds from the sale of the 3,000 copies, for which there will be a minimum donation suggested of £1, will therefore be profit. Please obtain your and your neighbours' and friends' copies in advance via kim@thecamberley.com The 1940s Open Day is FOVG's major fundraising event and **YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED**. Please offer to help selling programmes, donating tombola prizes, making cakes for the

[cake stall or helping on the day](#). Again, contact Kim who will be delighted to hear from you. Anne herself will be in the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room dressed in her Victorian costume and comments that she knows it's 1940s Open Day but the money raised is to restore a Victorian building. Do go and see her and husband Robert.

A GIVE-AWAY

Membership Secretary and Vice Chairman Jon Collins writes that as part of the forthcoming 1940s Open Day there will be a Membership/Information stall situated in a prominent position next to the Bandstand throughout the day. In addition to offering general information to visitors such as the location and timing of attractions and shows, Committee members and other volunteers will also collect donations and co-ordinate the sale of Souvenir Programmes across the park. As the 1940s Open Day is such a fabulous opportunity to generate new Friends for the charity a deal has been negotiated with the event ice cream supplier so that anyone who signs up will be given a voucher entitling them to a [free ice cream](#) on the day! Jon hopes that this added incentive will gather more Friends for the cause. Everyone loves ice cream and everyone loves the Valley Gardens!

OUR CHAIRMAN

Jane Blayney wishes to record with gratitude those who have funded the Peat Garden (the collective title given to the entire area round the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room): Wren, Elsie Sykes Trust, Duke of York Innovation Fund, Yorkshire Building Society for financial support, Harrogate Borough Council for their support "in kind" and the volunteers for their most generously given time and expertise. There has been an excellent response to the clearing and reconstruction of the Rock Garden and the creation of the Sensory Garden. Both have received universal acclaim from community and visitors alike. The western and north eastern areas of the Peat Garden site are still due for further clearing, grassing and re-planting. In our last edition a target of £75,000 was quoted for the project as a whole. Unfortunately, this has had to be revised to £110,000 due to unexpected costs. The good news is that £68,000 has been raised to date and there exists more determination than ever to achieve the difference of £42,000.

Attention is now being focussed on constructing a path linking the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room to the magnesia wellhead, painting the outside of the building and carefully restoring the inside. Early in the New Year a generous grant was received from the Liz and Terry Bramall Trust, but further funding is needed for the internal furnishings, conversion of the building into an Education and Information Centre, information boards, educational materials and the development of the rest of the site. Mark Coston has been HBC's Clerk of Works for the building part of the project and his enthusiastic support for this work is gratefully acknowledged; as is the support of so many generous donors, sponsors and talented and experienced members who give of their time so freely.

1940s OPEN DAY

After countless hours in preparation, arrangements are almost complete for 29 June and fine weather fervently hoped for. [Yorkshire Building Society](#), assisted by FOVG members are running the cake stall. [Cakes, both home-made and shop bought, are needed](#). Please contact Jane Blayney on 01423 505231. [Harrogate Mumlbers](#) are running the [Tombola](#). [Prizes are needed](#). Please contact Sally Haslewood on 07930401251 or Jane Blayney on 01423 505231. More [evacuee children are needed](#) to follow the [Marching Band](#). '40s dress and identity label preferred, but not essential. Gas masks and lunch boxes allowed! Please report to the Main Entrance of Valley Gardens, opposite the Museum by 11.15 am.

A magnificent display of military vehicles and re-enactments is promised thanks to [Simon Roberts](#), who is also [our principle sponsor](#). We are most grateful to [Squadron Leader Metcalfe](#), RAF Leeming for his [recruitment marquee](#) and of course, weather permitting, to the [Battle of Britain Memorial Flight](#) for providing what will be a spectacular [flypast of a Spitfire and a Hurricane](#).

EVENTS

Chairman Jane Blayney has given presentations at the Annual Meeting of the Duke of York Community Innovation Award recipients, the Harlow Residents Community Association, and the Jennyfield Community Centre Over 50s Club and conducted a group of members of the Wisconsin USA Hardy Plants Society on a tour of the Valley Gardens. [The Old Magnesia Well Pump Room will be open for the Heritage Open Days](#) from 11 am to 4 pm on Thursday 11 to Sunday 14 September. [Volunteers are needed](#). Come and see us!

Chairman: Jane Blayney (01423) 505231, Vice-Chairman: Jon Collins (01423) 506935, Treasurer: Anne Grange (01423) 522720
Secretary: Peter Blayney (01423) 505231, Marketing/Publicity Officer Kim Wilson 01423 561618,
Young Persons' Representative: Sally Haslewood 07930 401251
www.friendsofvalleygardens.co.uk