



Albatross

The Newsletter of Friends of Valley Gardens, Harrogate

AUTUMN/WINTER 2016



MORE ACCOLADES

The Peat Garden and Old Magnesia Well Pump Room have been awarded Platinum distinction by Yorkshire In Bloom. This is the highest level achievable and is one of only five in the whole of Yorkshire. It stands as testimony to the hard work that has gone into this project over the last five years. Accepting the award, FOVG Volunteer Gardeners Co-ordinator, Liz Chidlow commented "This is a fitting reward for all members of the team and helps to secure the Valley Gardens in the top echelons of the nation's ornamental parks".

At the recent Harrogate In Bloom awards ceremony Chairman Jane Blayney accepted the Harrogate In Bloom Shield 2016 on behalf of FOVG for the significant contribution made towards the ambiance of the Valley Gardens.

FOVG has sent in nominations in the individual and team categories in the annual Volunteer Oscar Awards.

JAPANESE GARDEN TEAM PRESS ON

After nine months of concentrated effort the Heritage Lottery Application for the restoration of the Japanese Garden has been lodged. The scheme needed to include detailed plans and costings both for the design of the garden and for the community involvement which is such a critical part of any Heritage Lottery Grant. FOVG has opted for the "Our Heritage" grant scheme which allows applications for between £10,000 and £100,000. Our application is for £89,200 and includes a 10% contingency, which is retained unless required. There is an eight week period for assessment of the application and the competition is strong for grants at all levels, so the quality of the application is very important. Following the assessment, the recommendation by the assessor will be taken to the next available monthly meeting. An answer is expected by the end of November. Project Leader, Ann Beeby commented "We have done our very best and hope to be able to give positive news for the scheme to go ahead before the end of the year".

KING EDWARD VII MEMORIAL GATE UPDATE

No real further technical work on this project has occurred since planning permission was granted in June. Our attentions have now turned to the task of fundraising with a target of £57,000. We have received a very positive response to our proposals from visitors to the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room Open Days and, while they give generously, we need to secure some large donations to achieve momentum to the campaign. We have made applications to several charitable funds who make grants to heritage projects and are hopeful that two initially positive responses may result in success. This is inevitably a slow process with the Trustees of such funds only meeting once or twice a year and then they are mostly oversubscribed with groups like ours seeking to fund their pet project. An application has been made to WREN which is a government-sponsored fund with income deriving from Landfill Tax. Some of the funds require you to have secured the majority of your funding before they will consider making grants which puts us in a Catch 22 situation. We are positive and remain confident that, with a competent team with a proven track record, an important consideration for the donors, we will be successful.

SUNDAY OPENINGS

On a trial basis the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room is now increasing its opening days to two Sundays in the month, following several FOVG members undertaking a familiarisation process. Visitors are now welcome from 10.30 am until 3.30 pm the first and third Sundays. Apart from improving access to the Education and Information boards, opening does provide an opportunity to put out the collecting buckets and a small but important extra income is the result. Original John Wilford impersonator, Robert Grange stated "The opportunity to meet so many people is very rewarding in itself but the extra help and donations are most welcome". Rumours are spreading about an "FC" event in the Pump Room on 18 December!

GRANT FACILITATES PRESENTATIONS

Both Ann Beeby and Jane Blayney undertake presentations to the community on behalf of FOVG. Ann speaks on "East Meets West through Japanese Gardens" and Jane on "Restorations, Completed and In Progress". A grant from Harrogate Borough Council's Small Grants Fund of £818.89 will enable the purchase of a projector and screen which will greatly assist.

CO-OP ON BOARD

FOVG is one of three charities named by the Otley Road branch of the CO-OP to benefit from their system whereby when you purchase CO-OP branded products as a member, a donation of 1% of the price is made. This is divided equally between the Pinewoods Conservation Group, Horticap and FOVG. If you name a specific charity, e.g. FOVG, the full 1% will come to us. So please join up, shop at the CO-OP and tell your friends!

7th 1940s OPEN DAY

Following this year's event which raised £7,927, a healthy increase on last year, readers will not be surprised to hear that plans are underway for the seventh 1940s Open Day to take place on Sunday 18 June next year. There will be changes to the usual format and an early application has been made for another popular flypast by one of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight aircraft. A flypast can never be guaranteed, depending as it does on our proximity to other events, aircraft availability, operational issues and, of course, the weather. Helpers are needed on the day. Please email pjblayney@gmail.com to offer your services.....and/or your cakes!

CHILDREN DISCOVER VALLEY GARDENS

120 Children from Western Primary School have recently been taken on a School Heritage Tour round the Valley Gardens by Chairman, Jane Blayney and Head Gardener, Simon Collier. It is hoped that, in addition to the knowledge gained about the history of the Valley Gardens, the children will learn to respect their environment.

BANDSTAND EMERGES

Trees have been removed from the Bandstand area in preparation for much needed repairs. It is expected that this acoustically positive building will soon be restored by Harrogate Borough Council to its former glory. The bandstand was constructed about the same time as the Sun Pavilion and the similarity of its architecture with that of the Sun Pavilion has once more been revealed.

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