



# Albatross



The Newsletter of Friends of Valley Gardens, Harrogate  
Charity No: 1148369

## SPRING/SUMMER 2017

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at St Peter's Church on 16 March, the AGM was attended by 21 Members. All existing Officers were willing to stand again and were duly re-elected. The team was augmented by Dr Jon Iddon and Stephen Watkinson as Marketing and Publicity Officers. Anne Grange and Peter Blayney will serve as Acting Membership Officers. The Trustees are: Jim Clark, Jane Blayney, Anne Grange, Liz Chidlow, Peter Blayney. Following the meeting, celebrated local historian and FOVG member Malcolm Neesam gave a fascinating illustrated talk entitled "The Story of Harrogate's Parks and Gardens", after which the Chairman gave a vote of thanks.

### JAPANESE GARDEN ON ITS WAY

Following the good news that the Heritage Lottery Fund will support the restoration of the Japanese Garden project with a grant of £89,200, preparatory work has already started on clearing out unwanted trees and shrubs. The addition of £4,000 from last year's 1940s Open Day together with donations from the Harrogate Flower Club, Asda, Waitrose, the Co-op and our North Yorkshire County Councillors should be sufficient to see the project through to fruition.

### KING EDWARD VII MEMORIAL GATE PREPARATIONS

More than half of the £60,000 needed to realise this project has already been raised and strenuous efforts are in progress to bridge the remaining gap, currently standing at £28,000, so that an immediate start can be made on this highly prestigious project. Funding comes from applications to charitable funding organisations, the annual 1940s Open Day profits and monies collected during the twice monthly opening of the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room. A visitor here has pledged £600 worth of concrete for the foundations. We have heard of a "secret" stock of railings that could be from the original set. Investigations are underway. A "Peace Garden" is now proposed as part of the scheme and it is hoped to officially open the Gate and Garden on 11 November 2018. Vigorous attempts will be made to meet this target. Extra support is needed from members. Please contact the Chairman: details on Page 2.

## **POOR GRASS!**

The advent of the highly popular Street Food Festival last August left its ugly mark both physically and in the minds of all who care for and about the Valley Gardens. It seems there are compelling populist reasons for Harrogate Borough Council to again place some of the grassed areas under threat from the large number of vehicles and visitors anticipated on the next occasion, the layout of which has been changed to the north of the Valley Gardens, fortunately leaving Bogs Field unaffected by vehicles.

## **OLD MAGNESIA WELL PUMP ROOM**

Now into its second year of opening, the restored Old Magnesia Well Pump Room is proving popular. On two Sundays in the month visitors can learn the fascinating story of the building itself, how it served to dispense “the Cure” and something of its rather chequered history later on. Visits from Santa Claus and the Easter bunny have even been spotted. A drink from the tap inside is available for the bold and has so far not proved fatal! Storyboards also describe the Valley Gardens with a glimpse of Harrogate’s spa heritage into the bargain and the chance to study a collection of rare Harrogate Codd bottles.

## **1940s OPEN DAY**

This will take place on Sunday 18 June. There will be even more stalls offering a greater variety of merchandise than in previous years. As well as the ever popular 1940s re-enactors and wartime military vehicles there will be representatives from the Royal Air Force and the Army and vintage cars as well. There will be some exciting changes to the entertainment from the bandstand as we welcome the Harrogate Band and the Harrogate Harmony Barbershop Chorus. Welcome back to some old favourites, Maria Manchester and Echo 4 2, all introduced by Major Swing. Weather permitting, there will be a thrilling low-level flypast by a Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Douglas C-47 Dakota aircraft.

A considerable amount of work goes into organising this day and it has fallen to a very small number of members who desperately need help from the rest of the membership or would-be members. Please contact Jane Blayney if you feel you can give even a couple of hours on 18 June. See below for contact details.

## **HARROGATE’S JEWEL**

Maintaining the Valley Gardens in its superbly beautiful state is down largely to the resident gardeners under the leadership of Head Gardener, Simon Collier. Simon is assisted by a team of volunteer gardeners ably co-ordinated by Liz Chidlow. More volunteers are always welcome to join members of the team regularly enjoying the complete change and relaxation that gardening can bring. Why not join them and leave your mark on this magnificent park? Liz’s contact details are given below.

Chairman: Jane Blayney (01423) 505231, Treasurer: Anne Grange (01423) 522720, Volunteer Gardeners  
Co-ordinator: Liz Chidlow (01423) 884651, Marketing/Publicity: Dr Jon Iddon and Stephen Watkinson  
07792 093466, Secretary: Peter Blayney (01423) 505231.

[www.friendsofvalleygardens.co.uk](http://www.friendsofvalleygardens.co.uk)