

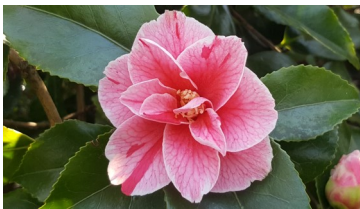


Issue 3
April 6th

FOVG Valley Gardens Watch during the Covid19 restrictions



This week We are delighted to be able to print a Spring poem from one of our members Barbara Stone. Barbara is compiling a book of her poetry about the seasons, and this is her poem.



Walking through Spring

**I walked through Spring when roots had stirred from sleep,
and winter's fog had cleared from the sky;
when streams had thawed and water, clean and deep,
meandered over rocks; the curlew's cry
joined bleats of early cotton lambs, newborn
and oak tree buds had started to unfold;
I saw the first, fine, leafy shoots of corn
that, touched by warmth, would grace the fields with gold.
And when the sun set in a globe of flame.
transforming silver bark to orange-red,
a sleepy soul trudged home the way she came,
assured of even brighter days ahead.
So sad when we, involved with worldly things,
can fail to see the gifts that nature brings.**

Barbara Stone

What is happening this week?

This week on my walks I have been impressed by everyone managing social distancing and yet interacting with one another. A Smile and Good Morning goes a long way. Some are happy to chat, others

just acknowledge as you give them space whilst they jog past. There is virtually no litter around the benches, which are being well used, and HBC are emptying the litter bins during the absence of Simon and his team. ***So Thank You everyone***

A look at our History:

This week Andrew Jordan, our Archivist, has sent me a piece about the 116th US Field Hospital. At a time when a Nightingale Hospital is about to open in Harrogate in the Convention Centre with 500 beds this story seems very apt:



We all walk past this memorial situated by the main entrance to Valley Gardens, perhaps stopping to look at the Spring flowers surrounding it. Recently a wreath has been placed there by the son of the commanding officer Surgeon Colonel Johnson, on the back of the wreath is a story which is worth reading especially at this time when our own NHS staff are making so many sacrifices.

The Story:

My Father Surgeon Colonel Johnson, was in charge of the 116th US Field Hospital based in Harrogate and commissioned this plaque in July 1944. In 1945 he was redeployed to Germany before the end of the war. He and his driver got a call to rescue a German farmer trapped in his own machinery. A few minutes later they hit a German land mine and both were severely injured. I was later told my Father was in severe pain, knew there was no cure for his back, and took his own life a couple of years later when I was only five years old. I have wanted to find this plaque all my adult life. Nick Smith of Yortours met me off the train with a big smile on his face. We located this plaque and Nick took this photo of me touching my Father's plaque. We found the remnants of the US 116th Field Hospital opposite what is now the Army Apprentice College, and I walked on the foundation of his temporary hospital. We went to the World War II cemetery and saw all the airman's graves from the time my Father was here. (edited AB)

What is looking Good this Week?



The Camellia in the Peat Garden, and new willow leaves against a blue sky. (taken last week but just as good now)

Why not send photos of your garden to :

fovg@friendsofvalleygardens.co.uk

