

Vintage crowds for fantastic 40's Day at Valley Gardens

By GRAHAM CHALMERS
Features Editor
news@harrogateadvertiser.co.uk

Nostalgia was in the air at the weekend's 40's Day at a sun-soaked Valley Gardens on Sunday - literally.

The highlight of this annual extravaganza which attracted an estimated 27,000 visitors this year, was a Battle of Britain Memorial Flight by a Spitfire.

Organised by a small group of volunteers from the Friends of Valley Gardens, this important fundraising event for FOVG included a display of military and vintage vehicles, a march of wartime child evacuees, music at the bandstand from the likes of Phoenix Choir, and Echo 42 Big Band, children's attractions - plus arts and crafts stalls and catering provided partly by the Hales Bar.

Khaki was the dominant colour scheme as real young soldiers from the Harrogate Army Foundation College mingled with visitors in vintage clothes.

The Old Magnesia Well Pump Room was also open all day with a collection of memorabilia of Harrogate's spa heritage.

Organisers hope to have raised more than £7,000 towards their work in preserving the town's spa heritage and restoring all parts of the



The spitfire flies over Valley Gardens. (1506281AM18)

Valley Gardens to their original glory.

First formed in 1987 with TV gardener Geoffrey Smith as its chairman, its original aim of restoring the Sun Pavilion was achieved in 1998 when the building was opened by The Queen.

After lying dormant, the FOVG was reactivated in 2009 with Tom Holleman as chairman before Jane Blayney took over.

Since then, the 100-strong Friends have made huge strides, restoring The Rock Garden, building a sensory garden and transforming the exterior of The Pump Room.

Their next aim is to restore the interior of the Pump Room.

None of this comes cheap or easily - the total bill for the complete transformation of the Pump Room is estimated to be £90,000.

But the dedication of this hardy band of volunteers is certainly impressive.

Local historian Malcolm Neesam said: "The public owe a great deal to the Friends of Valley Gardens.

"The restoration of the Magnesia Well Pump Room and the garden around it look great."

Trish McLaughlin, parks

development manager at Harrogate Borough Council, added her voice to the list of congratulations.

She said: "Officers from the council have worked in partnership with FOVG since they reformed in 2009.

"Since then, the volunteers have achieved a great deal, frequently exceeding our expectations.

"The Pump Room was a little-known feature and that area of the Valley Gardens was overgrown.

"Now the area is wonderfully attractive and a key feature in the Valley Gardens."



The large crowd enjoyed the sun in the afternoon in the Valley Gardens. (1506281A

PICTURES BY ADRIAN MURRAY



The Echo Four Two Band. (1506281AM12)



Chairman of The Friends of the Valley Gardens Jane Blaney with her husband Peter. (1506281AM17)



The Mayor of Harrogate Coun, Nigel Simms, The Mayoress Mrs Lynn Simms and the chairman of The Friends of the Valley Gardens Jane Blaney with children from Western Primary School in harrogate who acted as evacuees. (1506281AM1)





Amanda Wilkinson at 40's Day with some military helpers! (1506281AM13)



1940's day in The Valley Gardens, Bill and Carol Davis. (1506281AM6)



Leah Taylor with her 1940's motor bike. (1506281AM4)