

Friends of Crescent Garden

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2015

Message from the Chairman

We sold a record number of plants at our hugely successful plant sale in May. People came from Southampton and Romsey to support us, as well as many of the Friends, making it a really wonderful day. All the plants were grown throughout the year by our volunteers and Friends and collected together by Rita Rundle. Lesley Flett and her team supplied endless tea and homemade cakes for people to sit in the garden and enjoy. A huge thank you to everyone who helped, enabling us to send a large donation to the National Garden Scheme.

I am very pleased to tell you that we have planning permission to erect an additional shed in the garden. The shed will provide much needed extra storage and we hope it will be in place very shortly.

We look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible to our Christmas fair at the Parish Centre on Saturday 5th December at 10.30am. Do come and support us and perhaps be tempted to buy a delicious homemade cake or some preserves. There will also be our usual Christmas stall and fantastic raffle - not forgetting coffee with Friends.

Pamela Mawby



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 5th December 2015

Friends' Winter Fair

St. Mary's Parish Centre, Green Road, Alverstoke

From 10.30am to 12.30pm

All are welcome

We hope to offer the usual array of irresistible delights including bric-a-brac, thrilling books, homemade cakes, jams, marmalade and Christmas goodies. There will be a bottle stall and some decidedly delectable raffle prizes!

Admission £1 – includes free coffee, biscuits and excellent company – don't miss it !!

Thursday 10th to Sunday 13th December 2015

Christmas Tree Festival

St. Mary's Church, Alverstoke

The trees arrive on Thursday morning and are decorated in the afternoon. The Mayor will switch on all the lights in the evening and there will be carols and mince pies to be enjoyed. Doors open from 11am to 6pm from Friday to Sunday.

Saturday 27th February 2016

Friends of Crescent Garden AGM

St. Mary's Parish Centre, Green Road, Alverstoke at 2.30pm

Saturday 4th June 2016

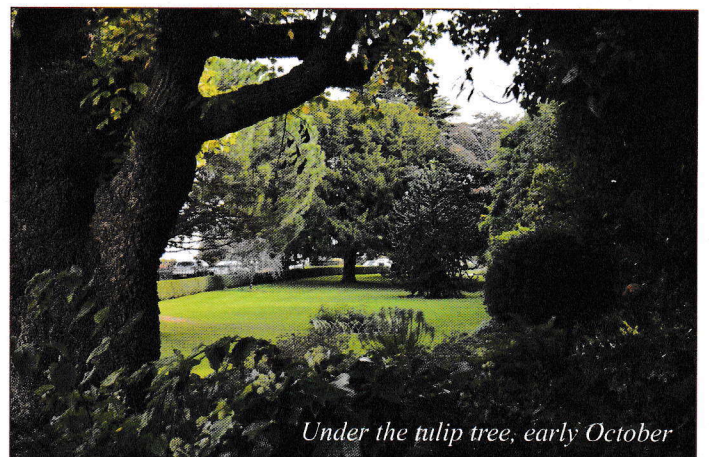
The Friends' Annual Plant Sale

Crescent Garden, 10am to 4pm.

Saturday 18th June 2016

The Friends' Annual Garden Party

The location of next year's spring visit will be announced at the AGM. For all enquiries regarding forthcoming events please contact David Merritt on 023 9258 2068



Under the tulip tree, early October

www.alverstokecrescentgarden.co.uk

GARDENERS' REPORT

Horticulture

The roses have been particularly splendid this year and were at their very best for the garden party in June. The hot weather and drying winds during July were challenging, with the hoses being put to full use on most Wednesdays. Lesley Flett and Pam Mawby visited Jonny Bass, artisan gardener at Mottisfont, for advice about a suitable planting scheme for the Repton basket and he suggested some date-appropriate roses, along with some *Dianthus* to under-plant them. He also pointed us in the direction of Allwoods Nursery who propagate these historic garden pinks.

We have chosen to have container grown roses now rather than wait for bare root roses in November and purchased *Rosa mundi*, *Rosa* 'Charles de Mills' and *Rosa* 'Quatre Saisons' from Peter Beales. Our trainee, Charles Ntumwa, was closely involved with the preparatory ground work, removing the soil and replacing it with Dave Palmer's compost. The roses have put on lots of growth due to Lesley's diligent care, though the *Rosa mundi* has developed a grey mould. Lesley contacted Peter Beales and followed their advice, but we may need to replace it.

Lesley potted the young *Dianthus* that were supplied by Allwoods, and Paul Hattin has been tending them so they are now well established prior to planting out. Sadly fire blight has affected the *Pyrus salicifolia* 'Pendula' (weeping silver pear). Caroline Smith (Parks & Landscape Contracts Officer at Gosport Borough Council) has inspected the tree and will liaise with Dave Stubington (Tree & Landscape Officer at GBC) to arrange its removal and replacement. Fire blight has also affected two roses and a *Viburnum* which we have removed. This disease cannot be controlled but we make plants more robust and immune to infection with proper management.

Other gardening tasks have included cutting back and pruning shrubs after flowering, and summer pruning of the hedges. Lesley and I are now considering new plants to provide spring interest in the garden.

Plant Sale

The NGS plant sale at the end of May was a great success. Rita Rundle was given an enormous number of plants which she split into a morning and afternoon supply! Whilst we were setting up even more pots were decanted from car boots and brought into the garden.

Large numbers of visitors enjoyed a sunny day and the many delicious cakes on offer. Once again Lesley, Cynthia Barrett and team were run off their feet with hardly a break. I was rather glad to be on Rita's team as we did manage to pace ourselves once the early rush was over!

Women's Institute Visit

On the 8th of July Lesley and I were pleased to welcome members of a local WI for a guided visit. We each led a group around highlighting the history and interesting horticultural points and both really enjoyed sharing information to such appreciative and interested people. Thank you to Lesley who took charge of the catering ably assisted by Pam Mawby. The homemade cakes were delicious!

Green Flag

One of the highlights of this last season was the achievement of the Green Flag award for this year, confirmed by Caroline Smith who brought the Green Flag to us on July 29. Caroline assumes that 'Secret Shoppers' made an unannounced visit in June to check that the garden still meets and exceeds expectations. 'The News' was prompted by the council to run a half page article naming Crescent Garden as one of the best parks in the country. Thank you to Pam Dimmock who collected the flag to make the usual alterations.

Volunteers

The Green Flag Award is a huge credit to all the volunteers who keep the garden so well-tended. This achievement is due to their hard work every Wednesday and because of their efforts the presentation of Crescent Garden is consistently high. Lesley and I would like to have a celebration to 'raise the flag' with the Green Team in October and are happy to approach Caroline Smith concerning this event in the garden. We'd like to extend a warm welcome to our new volunteers, Dr James Sykes and Richard McAnulty, who have joined our merry band.

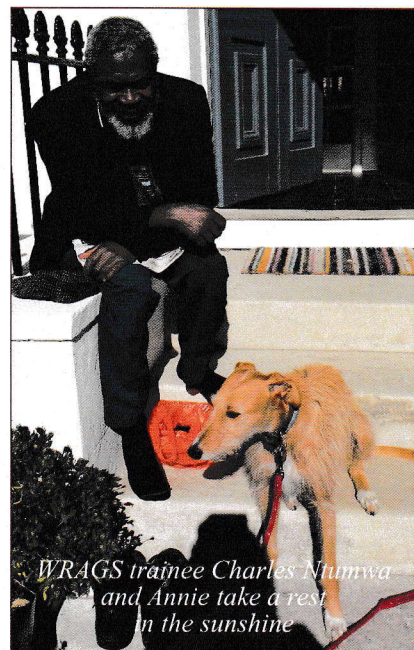
WRAGS Trainee

Charles Ntumwa continues his official training under the WRAGS scheme (Women's Farm & Garden Association). A hard working member of the 'Green Team', Charles keeps notes from the work Lesley and I cover with him each week and is already building up a good knowledge of plant names, with Sarah Palmer teaching him about propagation. The further funding of Sandi Lynes, our last trainee, has been a massive help – especially when Lesley was away for three weeks in September. A huge thank you to all involved!

We have been liaising with Caroline Smith regarding forthcoming tasks in the garden this autumn. The grass will be aerated and we have accepted her offer to put a barrier around the black bamboo to prevent suckering. The metal benches are to be repainted along with new welcome signs on the gates.



The committee thanking the volunteers for all their hard work during the year



WRAGS trainee Charles Ntumwa and Annie take a rest in the sunshine

Annie Sayle & Lesley Flett

GARDEN CUTTINGS

Wisteria - A Tale with a Twist

Wisteria is the quintessential climber for the English garden and an absolute joy in May and June when the fragrantly scented 'racemes' drape from the branches in a breath-taking display. The beautiful white example in Crescent Garden is no exception.

Next year sees the bicentenary of its introduction to England. Apparently one evening in May 1816 an Englishman named Captain Welbank had dinner with a rich Chinese business man in Canton. They dined beneath a pergola covered by flowering Wisterias which the Chinese called Zi Teng (blue vine).

Europeans had never seen such a beautiful plant and Captain Welbank persuaded his host to give him some seedlings which he took back to Surrey. Three years later, in 1819, the Wisteria bloomed for the first time and subsequently spread to gardens throughout Europe.

The plant was first named *Glycine frutescens* by botanist Carl Linnaeus but 65 years later revised to "Wistaria" by English botanist Thomas Nuttall to commemorate the German anthropologist Caspar Wistar (1761-1818). The name when pronounced with an English accent became "Wisteria" and with this slightly altered name it quickly spread.

It is interesting to note that all climbing plants native to the Northern Hemisphere wind and twist in an anticlockwise direction and all of those native to the Southern Hemisphere wind in a clockwise direction. This effect is caused by the earth's rotation and is similar to the direction of travel of water when draining through a plug-hole.

The Japanese Wisteria, which winds in a clockwise direction, is an exception to this rule as millions of years ago Japan was in fact in the Southern hemisphere but has drifted northwards over time, although the plant has had time to evolve and adapt to the Japanese climatic conditions. This direction of winding is one of the key differences between Japanese and Chinese varieties.



The magnificent wisteria in Crescent Garden

Richard Martin

VOLUNTEERS

PRIDE in the garden and PREJUDICE about it.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that an old neighbourhood in possession of a good garden must be in want of volunteers. However little known the feelings or views of such a neighbourhood may be, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the present volunteers that any newcomer is considered as the right person for someone or other of the many jobs which need doing.

Profound apologies to Miss Austen, but do come and join us in Crescent Garden any Wednesday morning between 9.30am and 1.00pm to say hello, ask questions, see if there are any activities you might enjoy or just to see what we are doing.

Rita Rundle



Two elegant visitors to the garden on heritage day

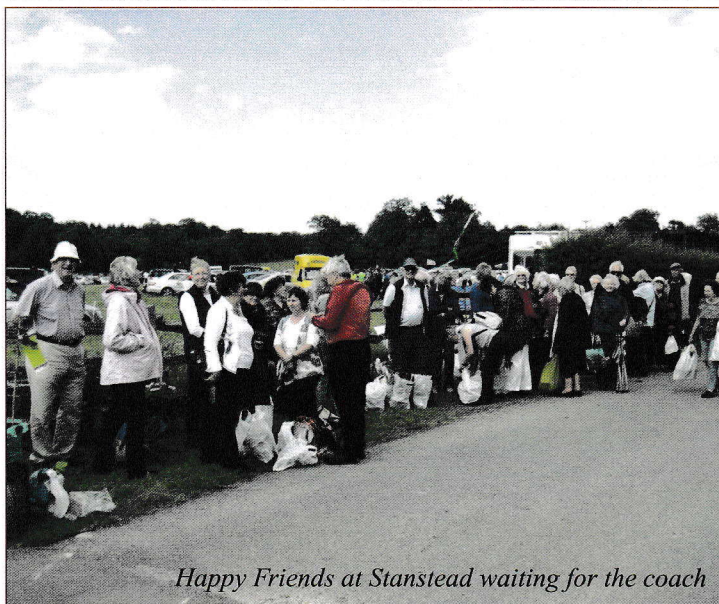
A big thank you from us all to David Merritt, who puts in so much of his time maintaining the fountain.



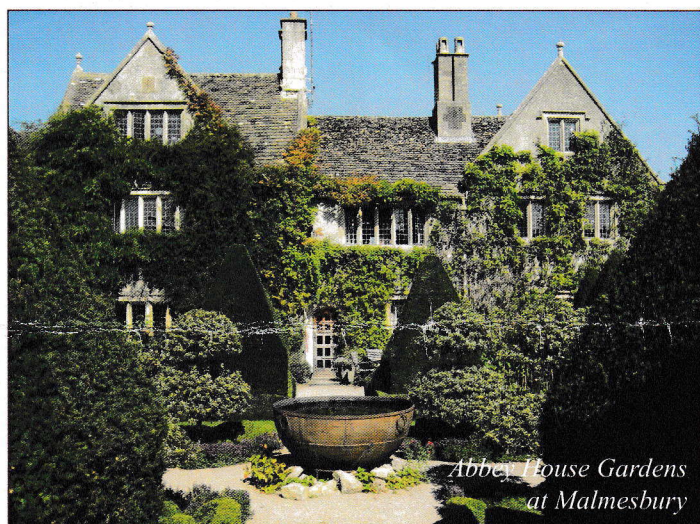
STANSTEAD

On Friday 5th of June forty-seven happy Friends visited Stanstead Garden Show. On arrival we were greeted by a shower of rain which brought out the umbrellas and had us all running for cover! Oh dear – was this going to be the order of the day? Thankfully not – the sun emerged and jackets came off and we all thoroughly enjoyed the show. There were 300 stalls of plants, garden furniture, food and artwork stretching far and wide. The plants were of good quality and temptingly priced – a number of Friends could soon be seen clutching their purchases! We were thrilled by the church which had been decorated by Emsworth Flower Club with much colour, skill and imagination. Some Friends looked around the house itself which was open for the occasion, and many of us sampled the excellent crab sandwiches available in the restaurant. The visit was enjoyed by all, particularly those Friends who prefer a shorter journey. Thank you to all who came for making the event so worthwhile.

Enid Billington



Happy Friends at Stanstead waiting for the coach



Abbey House Gardens at Malmesbury

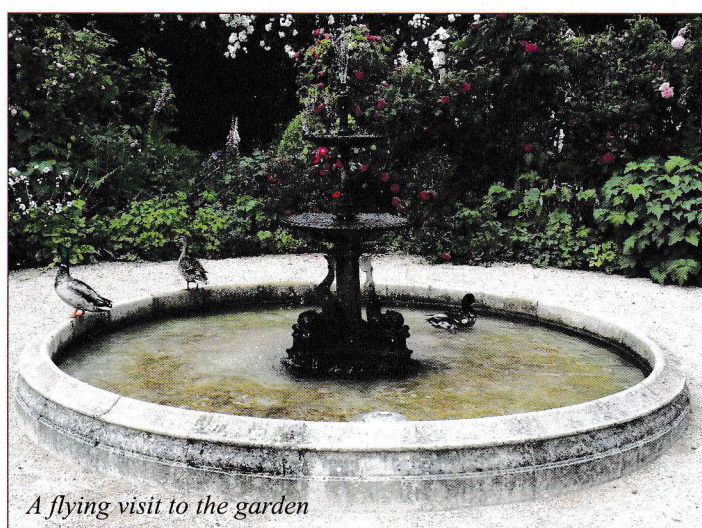
MALMESBURY

Glorious weather accompanied around thirty friends on our visit to The Abbey House Gardens at Malmesbury, Wiltshire. The five acre grounds are divided into garden 'rooms', with box topiary and miniature apple tree borders. There are some 2000 rose bushes on view, a little past their best when we visited, though this did not detract at all from the garden's splendour. Indeed I believe that the gardens would be lovely in all seasons. Situated in the grounds of the former Abbot's House, the arched pathways suggested cloisters and the original stone walls of the Abbey grounds made the gardens especially enchanting and restful. The Friends were fortunate to have the garden to themselves which allowed us to take our time and enjoy our surroundings, finding time for lunch of course in one of the many fine establishments in Malmesbury!

Enid Billington



Friends enjoying the garden party



A flying visit to the garden

JOIN THE FRIENDS!

For all membership enquiries contact Ginny Whelan at: gedandginny@fridaywhelan.plus.com

Any other enquiries please contact the Friends Secretary David Merritt on 023 9258 2068

or email: davidmerritt1@virginmedia.com