



FRIENDS OF CRESCENT GARDEN SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2021

Message from the Chairman

At last, we are able to bring you a much belated 2021 newsletter! I have included an up-to-date 'Dates for your Diary', although there is still some uncertainty about large groups gathering together. We've had to abandon plans for our annual garden party this year, but hopefully we'll be back to normal in 2022.

You may have noticed that we haven't sent out membership cards this year as we were forced to cancel our AGM in February. However, your re-joining fees have been safely gathered in. Please accept a heartfelt 'thank-you' for your continued support from us all.

We finally returned to work again in mid-April when restrictions were lifted. The garden was already looking like its old self when we held our socially distanced plant sale in May. It was our first event since the restrictions were eased and was highly successful.

The roses in the garden have been particularly beautiful this summer thanks to the care and attention of Sarah Palmer. We have an interesting article inside about Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759-1840) who drew and catalogued the early roses which are the forebears of those in the garden today.

We are delighted with our latest project at the eastern end of the garden, where an overgrown area has been reclaimed and allowed to seed itself thus becoming a 'Naturalised Flower Zone'. This is very much in keeping with the ideals of Regency gardening. Please do read our gardeners' report and Rita's interesting article this month in the 'Gosport Choice' magazine.

Friends of Crescent Garden received a bequest from the estate of Gill Comrie during lockdown. Gill passed away in 2019 and loved the garden. Her generosity has really helped us through the past difficult year.

Finally, please take the time to walk, sit and enjoy our wonderful Crescent Garden – being outside with friends is the safest place to be. Take care,
Elaine Martin



Dates for your Diary 2022

Saturday 26 February

Friends' AGM

Saturday 14 May

Plant Sale

Saturday 25 June

Friends' Garden Party

Head Gardeners' Report

Most gardeners will have found that this year their gardens have behaved in strange ways due to the unusual season of weather we have had. A great deal of rain early in the year followed by a very cold and dry April and, since then, a late spring and early summer which has been more like Winter and Autumn than we would like, has meant that many plants have bloomed much later than usual or not at all. Some plants are lush and green, but with very little in flower, while others have bloomed exceptionally well, like many varieties of rose. Self-sown poppies and other plants have, in unlikely places, made a riot of colour.

One place where self-seeded plants have produced an interesting tapestry of varied colours and shapes is in the new area at the eastern end of the garden. It has now been designated as a Naturalised Flower Zone. Fortunately, this style of gardening is very much in keeping with the ideals of Regency gardening to which we try to adhere.

Some plants were planted in this area when it was set up last year - fuchsias, ferns, myrtle, miniature pomegranate, scented pelargoniums, roses, camellia, iris and many spring bulbs among others, but there are far more species that have not been deliberately planted.

Many of the plants identified are those which often appear on disturbed ground, as their seeds can survive in the soil for many years and will germinate when brought to the surface. In this category are poppies, kangaroo apple, *Lychnis coronaria*, foxgloves, *Echium*, shoo fly plants and *Onopodium acanthium* or cotton thistle. Many seeds or parts of plants will have been dropped by birds. In this category are hawthorn, *Sisyrinchium striatum* (pale yellow-eyed grass) *Helleborus foetidus* (stinking hellebore), *Iris foetidus* (stinking iris), Herb Robert, sweet rocket, *Atriplex hortensis* (red orach) and many others.

On the left-hand side of the path as you enter the Naturalised Flower Zone you will see a tall example of *Verbascum thapsus* (common mullein or greater mullein), an attractive statuesque plant with yellow flowers. A few weeks ago, this plant bore a number of brightly coloured caterpillars busily munching away at the leaves. As you can see, no permanent damage was done; the plant has survived, and the mullein moths (*Cucullia verbasci*) have flown away.

Having a fairly 'wild' part of the garden does not mean that no work will be done there as not all the plants which appear will we wish to keep; bindweed, brambles and bay shoots will need to be firmly eradicated or there would be little else growing there! An 'informal' garden is often the most difficult to maintain as it is not easy to find a balance between gentle control of 'wildness' and rigid regimentation.

Irene Buggle, Stef Fisher, Sharon Miles and Gina Rowe



The Green Team have worked so hard this year to keep the garden going through two lockdowns and some dreadful weather. We're a friendly crowd – you're welcome to come and meet us any Wednesday morning in the garden for coffee and a chat.



Garden Cuttings

Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759-1840) – A Tribute

Crescent Garden boasts an exceptional collection of old roses whose origins span the late-18th and mid-19th centuries. Leafing through a collection of botanical works recently, I was struck by a depiction of the *Portland Rose* by Pierre-Joseph Redouté and was reminded by Elaine that the garden is fortunate to have a superb example in the east Repton basket – a fantastic sight en-masse with its clear cerise, semi-double blooms. Anyone remotely interested in botanical illustration will have heard of Redouté, one of the most talented, and probably the most popular, botanical artists ever known.



Born July 10th 1759 into a family of Flemish painters at St. Hubert, Ardennes, Belgium he was producing small paintings at the age of six, left home at thirteen and spent ten years living a precarious life as an itinerant painter, travelling across Flanders and the Low Countries. In 1782, aged 23, he joined his elder brother Antoine, who was working in Paris as a stage painter. Theatre decoration, rich in flowers, stimulated Pierre-Joseph and he was soon modelling himself on the great flower painter Jan Van Huysum (1682-1749).



In his spare time, he frequently drew in the Jardin Du Roi. Here he caught the attention of Charles L'Heritier de Brutelle, a noted French aristocrat, biologist, plant collector and devotee of Linnaeus who taught Redouté about plant anatomy and what botanists required of illustrations. He befriended the Dutch painter Gerard van Spaendonck (1746-1822), a professor of floral painting at Jardin du Roi, who helped Redouté develop his artistic style, including unique engraving and water-colouring methods. He was soon brought to the attention of royalty and was appointed painter to Queen Marie-Antoinette in the late 1780s. He continued painting for the Jardin du Roi after the revolution and the execution of the royal family. He dominated botanical painting between 1790-1830 and in 1798 the Empress Josephine Bonaparte, the first wife of Napoleon Bonaparte, also became his patron and appointed him to paint the flowers of the garden at Malmaison. Indeed, *Rosa "Souvenir de la Malmaison"* is among the Crescent Garden collection today. He produced over 2100 paintings depicting over 1800 different species and between 1817 and 1824 published the work which was to become the pinnacle of his success – namely the monograph "Les Roses".

He died suddenly, aged 80, on 19th June 1840 in Paris where his grave can be found in Pere Lachaise Cemetery. His declining years, spent simply as a painting teacher, were approximately concurrent with the construction of The Crescent and its garden, now approaching two centuries ago. Spare him a thought when next you enjoy the roses in Crescent Garden.



Richard Martin

Garden Volunteers

Covid Picnic

Let's all be happy and childish about our problems with the pandemic and sing the following words to the tune of 'The Teddy Bear's Picnic'.

If you go down to the shops today
You're safer to go alone
If you go down to the shops today
You'd better go in your mask

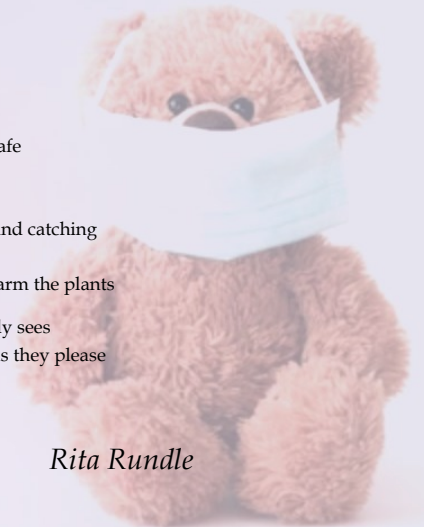
For every germ that ever there was
Will gather there for certain,
But no! The trollies are cleaned
Distance marked so keep apart

Picnic time for children, though
and parents, too, are having
A lovely time today
Watch them, as they run around
And see them picnic there in gardens fine.

Crescent Garden keeps them safe
They love to play and shout
They never have any cares
The dogs as well are running and catching
The balls so care'fly thrown
Because they're not going to harm the plants

Beneath the trees where nobody sees
They'll hide and seek as long as they please
'cause that's the way the
Families have their picnics

Rita Rundle



Garden Snapshots

April – back to work at last!



We were surprised & delighted to receive a Green Flag award in 2020



Tom and Trevor working out what bit goes where while fixing the fountain



Stef and Sharon scrubbing the fountain



Our socially distanced plant sale in May

Coffee time!



Sadly, we have lost two former committee and Green Team members David Merritt and Pam Dimmock. They were such good friends to us all and passed away within a month of each other – we will miss them both.



JOIN THE FRIENDS!

For all membership enquiries contact Ginny Whelan at virginia@fridaywhelan.plus.com
Any other enquiries contact Gina Rowe on 02392 358207

Compiled by Elaine Martin / Designed by Ben Martin