



Minutes of the Friends' AGM, 2007

The Spring Newsletter

Dates and information on events this year

Chairman Don Cripps welcomed the Mayor of Gosport, Cllr. Mrs June Cully, and around 90 Friends to the Parish Centre.

Apologies had been received from many unable to come.

Minutes of the last AGM were approved (*proposer Joyce Upperton, seconded by Julian Osborne*).

Matters arising from them were included in the following Reports.

The Curator's Report

This was illustrated by a collage of photographs and other items, including reports and feedback from the Green Heritage Site Judges. Wendy gave special thanks to all Friends who worked in the Garden during the year - and to Julian, for a never-failing supply of hospitality for every volunteer. (*An abbreviated version of this report is in the following Spring Newsletter*).

The Chairman's Report

Don Cripps was happy to record a highly successful year, during which Crescent Garden won a third Green Flag, sponsored by the Civic Trust, for the Borough. For the first time it is now accredited, together with S. Mark's Churchyard, as a Heritage Green Site. This Award, sponsored by English Heritage, is one of only 21 awarded nationwide.

Two thoroughly enjoyable Friends' Outings: In Spring, to Sissinghurst and Gt Dixter, in Autumn to Wilton House. Don hoped for more outings this year and appealed for volunteer Organisers.

Children from Chernobyl hugely enjoyed their Party and Treasure Hunt, given by kind Friends who had as much fun as their young guests .

The Garden Party was a memorable success on a beautiful evening. In line with constraints discussed during consultations over GBC's Operational Conditions for Events in the Garden, tentage was entirely contained in the Garden's East wing - which actually worked very well.

The Chairman warmly thanked the many Friends who had worked so hard towards the success of every organised event. "But we do need ongoing volunteers, if the fun is to continue," he said, appealing for anyone able to spare just a little time - one outing, perhaps? - to give it some thought.

Commercial use of Crescent Garden As reported last year, this has been a matter of great concern. Friends' voluntary work is done for the community, for whom they feel the Garden should always be freely accessible. Patient consultation between Friends' representatives, Councillors, and heads of relevant Departments in the Town Hall, resulted in a set of **Operational Procedures** for Events in Crescent Garden. Now approved by the Council's Legal Dept. and Licensing Unit, these GBC Conditions will apply to everyone wishing to arrange a n event for profit in Crescent Garden. *The Conditions were displayed on a large board at the meeting and the Chairman outlined salient points:*

Definition of "Event" - Any gathering organised for *commercial gain*, either for business or Charity - thus including Friends' fund-raising events. *Wedding photography* was unaffected, unless part of a Reception, when it became an Event, subject to Council's Conditions.

Only one Event per month; no heavy duty Marquees; Events not to exceed 2 hour's duration, and to be restricted to the grassed areas in the wings, keeping the central area free for community access and enjoyment.

These restrictions, together with Borough inspection before and after each event, would afford protection for the Garden and for its enjoyment by the whole community.

The Chairman praised the constructive partnership between the Friends, GBC's Leisure and Parks Departments, and Councillors on this important issue. Very occasional further meetings at this level would help co-ordinate the efforts of all concerned to maintain the standards necessary for the retention of Green Flag and Heritage Site Awards.

Plea for help for the coming year: Don identified areas where more help was urgently required, appealing for 2 new Committee Members (Only 4 Meetings a year, at 2 hours a time). One of these might like to have special concern for children's activities in Crescent Garden - there were several School visits last year, besides other children's events. *(See Newsletter)*

Don ended his report by warmly thanking Guy Sitwell and his highly efficient team for the day's arrangements; Bob and David Bone for setting up the very necessary audio equipment, and everyone who had contributed to the magnificent Tea.

The Treasurer's Report.

David Wardle presented his 8th statement of the Friends' finances. These were flourishing, the Friends having a surplus of about £1,000 over the year. All three fundraising events had been financially successful, the Plant Sale covering the Friends' contribution to the National Gardens Scheme.

Their Yellow Book gives Crescent Garden national publicity, besides a widely recognised hallmark of gardening excellence. (*See end note*).

The Trainee Gardener, Christine Gwynne, was two thirds funded by GBC and one third by the Friends. Christine had expressed a wish for a second year' s training with the Friends, and it was hoped that this could be managed, although as a 2nd year trainee her rate of pay should be raised from the current £58 pw, possibly to £65 or £70. Christine has also funded her own travel.

David highlighted significant income and outgoings in his statement*, which was distributed to those attending. The accounts were

The accounts, kindly audited by Ian Gallet, were approved. (*Proposer John Hervey, seconded by David Wright, motion carried by an overwhelming show of hands.*)

The Chairman thanked David for his excellent stewardship over the past 8 years.

** Friends wishing to inspect it can apply to David for a copy.*

The Election of Officers

(Don Cripps (Chair), Wendy Osborne (Curator) David Wardle (Treasurer) Maggie Cochran (Membership Sec.) Rita Rundle, Jill Streatfeild-James and Pam Dimmock. A new member, David Merritt, has very kindly undertaken the task of Secretary for the Friends; he was introduced to the Meeting by the Chairman, and warmly welcomed to the team. The

Chairman and Committee, with David Merritt, were re-elected/elected en bloc, again with a unanimous show of hands.

Dates for Diaries:- See end of Spring Newsletter.

AOB: There were two Questions about the Operating Conditions:-

1..Was any charge made by GBC to commercial/fund-raising users?

A. No: but users would be liable to any expenses incurred by the Council resulting from their event.

2..What about Family Picnics? Will they count as events?

A. No: the conditions are specifically designed to preserve free public enjoyment of the Garden. They only apply to money-making events.

The Mayor of Gosport, Cllr Mrs June Cully, warmly thanked the Friends for all they had achieved, remembering the happy day when she had personally raised the third Green Flag in the Garden, and wishing the Friends every success in this year's endeavours .

The traditional delicious Tea brought the AGM to a cheerful close.

The Spring Newsletter

Last Summer we were all thrilled about the **Green Heritage Site Award** for the Garden and St Mark's Churchyard. Judges' Reports and comments became available just before our AGM, and they were well worth a look.

They spell out the achievement of the Friends of Crescent Garden and Friends of St. Mark's Churchyard in an exciting and important Partnership.

Restoration of the Churchyard - owned by the Parish of S Mary's Alverstoke - began a few years after that of Crescent Garden. An extraordinary amount of work done by quite a small number of people transformed it from sad dereliction into something quite different: a very special place.

Robert Cruickshank passionately wanted a Church for Angleseyville, and the carefully restored Victorian gravestones bear the names of many of its early

inhabitants from all walks of life, though St. Mark's Church is long gone.

Sitting near the Cruickshank family memorial, looking at the backs of his Crescent, there is a sharpened awareness that people resting in this tranquil place once enjoyed Crescent Garden just as we do now.

Like us, they walked there and laughed, calling to their children and their dogs, taking pleasure in flowers and sunshine. Crescent Garden was part of their daily lives; but it can only illustrate half their story, no matter how lovingly restored. It is only when you consider Garden and Churchyard together that their histories come vividly to life.

With permission from Toby, Roy, and the Rector, it was suggested that the Council might submit both sites together, in a third attempt to win that elusive Green Heritage Award.

The Judges came on a beautiful June day. They seemed a little sceptical about this unusual addition to Gosport's entry, and still unconvinced of the Heritage value of what was left of Angleseyville in the Garden. Doubtfully, they followed us to the Churchyard gates.

The cold Spring had delayed the wild flowers, and they were still at their peak, waving gently in a soft breeze around the restored tombstones and crosses. Above a drift of Ox-eye daisies an Angel's upflung arm pointed to the sky; small plants crept in endlessly varied embroideries over each rectangular resting place. Somehow the peace and beauty of this little churchyard impart a feeling of surprising joy.

The judges stood at the gates and stared, their jaws dropping.

They reported it as 'a Showstopper' - quite a description for a small old cemetery that ten years ago was a jungle of brambles, litter and smashed masonry.

What the Judges said about the new Green Heritage Site:-

"The Churchyard clearly fills a wider role than just a burial site...it is innovatively planted with regard to encouraging bio-diversity through native plants and those which attract nectar-feeding insects and birds."

"Crescent Garden is a faithful recreation of Regency gardens and shows keen horticultural interest, although not over-manicured, and encouraging bio-diversity... succession is well-planned. The planted Reptonian Baskets, railings and benches really do enhance the historic character of the Garden"

"A showstopper! With inclusion of the Churchyard the features make the site more relevant to the Heritage Green Site Award."

"A delightful pair of sites, that beckon you in. A remarkable achievement for community-led initiatives - keep up the good work!"

Feedback like this is wonderfully encouraging.

They recommended there should be a Website, to cover both sites. Thanks to David Burgess, one is already online. (www.angleseville.com)

The Judges made it clear, however, that all our efforts will be wasted, if the new **Interpretation Board** is not in place by this judging round. We can only hope the Council can achieve this - artwork for it, produced by Friends, was approved by the Judges last year.

This year Parks Officer Caroline Smith has already contacted Gosport's Wildlife Officer to suggest a Butterfly watch in the Churchyard, and another Moth-Watch in the Garden. GBC's Streetscene has initiated a new anti-dog fouling patrol. The Council's Parks and Arboricultural Officers have set up a Working Group with the Friends, to meet seasonally in the Garden. Special edging to preserve the outline of the central beds - for which we owe thanks to the Fairhall Family

and Mrs Goss - could be in by the time you read this.

We're getting real support from these initiatives.

Crescent Garden is now an established and much loved feature of our community's landscape. School children, families with toddlers, dog walkers, garden visitors, the disabled, the elderly, the visually handicapped: the Garden has something for them all, and welcomes them in.

Together with the Churchyard, it contributes to the quality of life of the people of Gosport and to their appreciation of a small part of their heritage. Just as importantly, perhaps, it brings many people together to enjoy community events: our AGM, lovely Summer Garden Parties, the Plant Sale, and cheerful Winter Coffee Mornings - which in turn help to sustain and protect this lovely place. The Friends have much to be proud of.

An idea on a different subject. Our Garden Party has welcomed a cheerful rise in the number of young children. Many have been extremely helpful, carefully passing round little eats. It's great to have them - but we're conscious that as it's a distinctly grown-up (*i.e. dead boring!*) affair these younger age-groups are rather missing out. It's been suggested that parents of younger children might like to consider putting together a Children's own Garden Party? Not a fund-raiser, nothing elaborate, a sort of Bring-a-Plate-to-Share kind of picnic in the Garden. Perhaps a Treasure Hunt, or a Garden Quiz competition? (Sounds unlikely, but Leesland Infants had a riotous time with one.) Chernobyl Children have a great time, and it would be good to see our home-grown variety having one too.

Maggie Cochran - 92-501689 - would be delighted to hear from parents who think it's a starter and worth a try - *but if it's to catch this Summer, planning needs to begin asap!*

Information on Events for 2007.

We have a Visit! - to **Wakehurst Place**, thanks to Pam Dimmock.

“Wakehurst Place is Kew’s country garden, “ and the home of their Millenium Seed Bank, with fascinating related Exhibitions in the House. Spectacular grounds, full of Spring delights - Bluebells and Rhododendrons in May - but there are also nest cameras for observing birdlife, bubbling brooks, streams and ponds, and rare trees “All set in 300 breathtaking acres”.

After all that, it’s good to know there’s also an excellent Stables Restaurant and a Seed Cafe - or you are welcome to picnic. Pam and John have done a recce for us and strongly recommend it as a visit to a lovely place with a difference.

Date: 22nd May. **Travel time** 1hr 30 to 2hrs. **Entry price** for non-NT Members. : £7 20 if pre-paid, **coach fare** will be approx. £10 .

Pam has leaflets she will be happy to show you; for times and final details see the Garden Party Flier in early May.

Interested? Please ring Pam urgently on 92-56761.

A deposit of £10 will enable her to go firm on the coach booking, but she needs to know soon.

The Plant Sale **Date 28th May**, 10 to 12 , Bank Holiday Monday. Generous offers of plants at AGM promise an interesting morning for gardeners - do bring and buy!!

The Garden Party, Saturday 16th June.

In 2004, the AGM voted unanimously to keep the catering for this Friends’ main event in-house, rather than go to outside caterers. Slips were then circulated to

everyone, with great response. The food has been wonderful ever since, with many volunteers each producing up to a 100 small eats, according to how many of them there are to share the task. The more cooks there are, the lighter the load!

Jill Parry (92-580296) has again kindly offered to co-ordinate volunteers, and will let you know this year's requirement. *Thank you*, in advance - but do remember to keep your ingredients bill, so you can be refunded for them.

Raffle Prizes gratefully received in due course by Rita Rundle, 92-587311.

Numbers of Guests: As usual, each household may bring a couple. Want more?? Then please arrange with another Friend who is not having guests - or cannot come at all! - that you may get tickets in his or her name.

Ticket Price: Same again: £7-50. Under-15's £3. This year, £1 for the under sevens, babies free.

***Please note: New arrangement. Only one Ticket seller, this year: Gill Comrie-10 Anglesey Arms Road: 92-588316**

Please could you pay by cheque, to avoid cash in her house? Gill will have the latest membership List by her, so if you've forgotten your subs this year, you can add it in and catch up, in one simple transaction. Gill will also collect the £1 for Friends' children/grandchildren, and enter them on your Tickets.

Ring her to arrange when to pick up your tickets: leave a message if Gill's out and she'll get back to you.

They'll be on sale from when you receive the flier, about seven weeks before the Garden Party, until a week before, giving the Committee time to assess if extra help or catering is needed.

Gill will have **280 Tickets** to sell, which should be more than enough to meet the demand, since June has many other competing events.

With an additional 15 retained for official Invitations , we reckon the potential numbers are probably the most we can manage under present arrangements. *So - do please get your tickets as soon as they are available, to be safe and to give us a clear idea of numbers early on.*

Absolutely Last day for getting Tickets - Saturday 9th June

The Chernobyl Party: 27th June

Leslie Flett (19 Cres Rd. 92-613907)has very kindly taken on the organisation this year, and would be glad to hear from anyone who'd like to help. Reminders nearer the time!

STOP PRESS: *Just heard - the Friends have won a Silver Trowel, for 10 years in the Yellow Book, in support of the National Gardens Scheme.*

Howzat?

Wendy Osborne



THE CRESCENT, 'ANGLESEYVILLE', 1830