



# FRIENDS OF CRESCENT GARDEN SPRING NEWSLETTER 2018

## Message from the Chairman

What an exciting winter we've had – Mother Nature has thrown nearly everything she's got at us! We've had gales, frosts, endless rain and then snow from the east – beautiful to look at but not good for our early spring flowers. It always amazes me what weather our plants can tolerate, but thankfully the garden is recovering and summer is very much on its way.

Our wonderful head gardeners Lesley Flett and Annie Sayle have stepped down after five years. They've done a magnificent job and we will miss them very much. Replacing them is a team of six gardeners from our Green Team who will share the duties in order that it shouldn't be such a commitment for just one or two members.

David Merritt has retired as Honorary Secretary as he has not been too well of late. He will still be a valued part of our team, though with much lighter duties. Thank you David for all your help during my first year as Chairman. We are delighted to welcome Gina Rowe as his replacement.

Enclosed with today's newsletter you will find fliers for our visit to Sherborne, the forthcoming plant sale and the Friends' summer garden party. Please do continue to support us. We look forward to seeing you and hope that you will find time to enjoy the garden at its best this summer.

*Elaine Martin*

## Dates for your Diary

### Thursday 7th June Spring Visit

Sherborne Castle & Gardens  
12th Century castle set in 1000 acres of parkland  
*Booking form enclosed with this newsletter*

### Saturday 9th June 10am to 4pm

Annual Plant Sale at Crescent Garden  
All are welcome, refreshments available  
*Please clearly label any plants that you bring along - for help delivering plants contact Rita Rundle on 023 9258 7311*

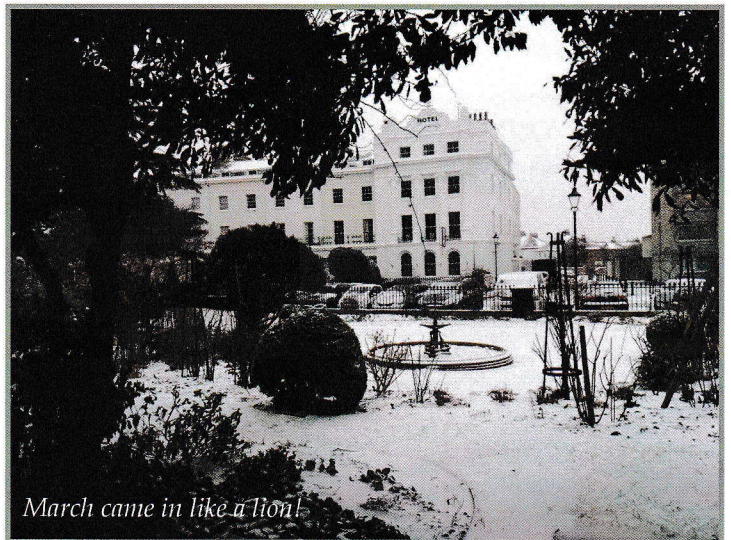
### Saturday 21st June 6pm to 8pm

Friends' Garden Party at Crescent Garden  
*Booking form enclosed*

### Saturday 16th September

Heritage Open Day  
Our Green Team will lead guided tours of the garden between 12pm and 4pm - refreshments available, plus plants, chutneys & jams for sale

*Please come and enjoy your garden!*



*March came in like a lion!*

## Membership

A very gentle reminder to all our friends who may have overlooked renewing their membership this year. We really value your support and are grateful for your help to carry Crescent Garden onwards. To re-join please contact Trish Kelly on 023 9258 2786.



# Head Gardeners' Final Report

Five years ago we became Head Gardeners and felt our role was to help conserve Crescent Garden.

We are indebted to the original Friends of Crescent Garden, formed in 1991 by Wendy Osborne. They decided at its inception that the Garden's Regency character should be restored and that no plants should be used that were not in this country by 1850. Wendy devised a central planting plan based on the style of the period. Both of us feel that these early decisions have made the garden a very special place, and we have sought to preserve its unique atmosphere.



To carry on the period planting we have reintroduced Tulipa 'Couleur Cardinal', Kaizerskroon and Clusiana, and introduced Tulipa sylvestris. Indigenous wild plants such as snowdrops, bluebells and Welsh daffodils have been planted.

We have prioritised the wellbeing of the specimen trees with the help of the Borough arborist, Dave Stubington. Both of us are particularly delighted that the Slender Magnolia (*M. denudata*) is now flowering profusely and that the Monkey puzzle tree (*Araucaria aruacana*) continues to astound and charm visitors.

Gosport Borough Council have had a huge part to play in providing support during our tenure. We are particularly grateful to Caroline Smith for showing faith in us and sharing her practical advice and knowledge.

It has been a privilege to show people around the garden, and to have the opportunity to share with people the history and horticulture that make this garden so unique. Over our five years as head gardeners fund raising events have seen growing numbers visiting the garden and our NGS open day and plant sale attracts not only local people but visitors from as far away as Dorset, the New Forest and Basingstoke. As well as enjoying the garden, visitors enjoy tea, coffee and delicious homemade cakes. We both feel strongly that sharing the garden and inspiring others is a crucial element in ensuring its future conservation.

At the Gosport in Bloom Awards 2017 the Green Team was presented with the gold award for Best Volunteer, Community and Neighbourhood Garden and also the Mayor's special award. These accolades were in addition to the Green Flag award and are a credit to their hard work. The Green Team are a wonderful group of gardeners and valued friends who have made working in Crescent Garden an absolute pleasure.

*Lesley Flett and Annie Sayle*

## Garden Volunteers Needed!

*Come gather 'round people  
Wherever's your home  
And admit that these gardens  
Around us have grown*

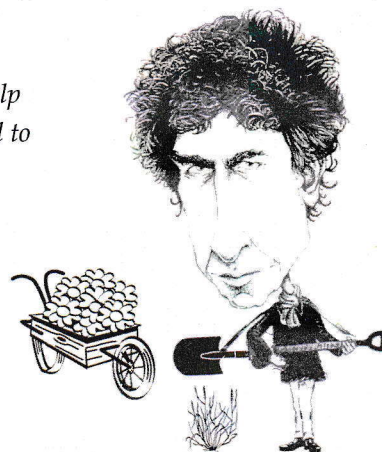
*Head gard'ners are leaving  
The committee's reduced  
If gardens to you  
Are worth havin'  
Then you better start helpin'  
Or it might overgrow  
For the times they are a-changing*

*Come IT folk, Treasurers,  
Please heed the call  
Don't stand in the doorway  
Don't block up the hall*

*We would love more help  
With the planning; and to  
Keep gardens running  
The paperwork grows.  
So join us tomorrow  
To help things along.  
The times they are a-  
changing*

Probably as well to ignore this pastiche of Bob Dylan's famous song, but please take

on board its message. We need not just gardeners to keep the garden up to the standard we all expect, but people with computer skills, accounting skills, and organizational skills of various kinds. So give it some thought and see if you would like to join us.



*Rita Rundle*



# Garden Cuttings

Crescent Garden is populated with many fine trees, some of which date back to its late Georgian genesis. Commanding the central area and just a few paces away from the fountain stands the awe-inspiring cedar of Lebanon (*cedrus libani*), a tree of truly majestic architecture, the most celebrated of all the cedars native to the mountains of the Eastern Mediterranean Basin and by far the oldest in cultivation. The remaining grove of ancient trees on the slopes of Mount Lebanon has been a place of pilgrimage for centuries. There are roughly 400 of them, the biggest 48 feet in girth and calculated to be about 2500 years old.



The first cedar of Lebanon to be planted in Britain was at Childrey Rectory in Oxfordshire in 1646. It was brought to England, as a seed, by the rector Dr Pocock soon after his retirement as the Embassy chaplain in Constantinople. It is alive today, 372 years later, its trunk 25 feet in girth! John Evelyn FRS, the revered writer, gardener and diarist did his best to popularise the cedar of Lebanon in the 1670s but it was not until the earliest trees started to bear cones that they could be planted on a massive scale. In the mid-18th century they became a craze. The Duke of Richmond planted 1000 at Goodwood in 1761 and indeed they were the only exotic trees which Capability Brown used in his vast landscapes.

They continued to be planted in great numbers until the 1830s when the new giant firs from David Douglas's travels began to take their place. Our own impressive specimen was probably planted as part of Messrs. Cruickshank and Owen's embryonic garden and although a relative 'infant' is nonetheless around 180 years old and thankfully in very fine fettle.

*Richard Martin*

# Friends' Annual General Meeting



Lesley Flett & Annie Sayle receiving their farewell gifts from the Deputy Mayor Diane Furlong and Chairman Elaine Martin

This years AGM on Saturday 24 February was very well attended. Many thanks to all who came and supported us including the Deputy Mayor Diane Furlong and her consort Raymond Furlong. The traditional tea after the meeting was much appreciated. Thanks to all those who contributed!

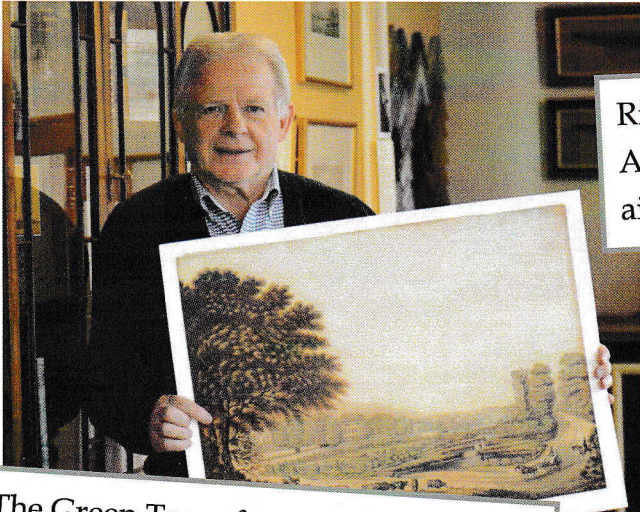


The tea team girls at the AGM





# Other news this winter...



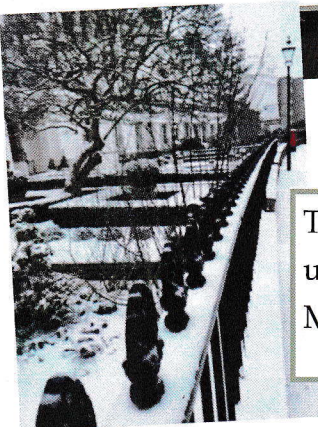
Richard Martin holding the early watercolour of Alverstoke on which he based his illustrated talk in aid of Crescent Garden, to a packed parish centre.

The Green Team & committee enjoying their Christmas party, generously hosted by Rita & Bill Rundle.



Rita, Sarah & Kate decorating the Friends of Crescent Garden entry at the St Mary's Church Christmas Tree Festival.

Irene Buggle & Andrew Torrance flattening the path after fountain maintenance.



The Crescent snuggling under a blanket of March snow



Our amazingly long hazel catkins!

## JOIN THE FRIENDS!

For all membership enquiries contact Ginny Whelan at [virginia@fridaywhelan.plus.com](mailto:virginia@fridaywhelan.plus.com)  
Any other enquiries contact David Meritt on 02392 582068