

FRIENDS OF CRESCENT GARDEN SPRING NEWSLETTER 2023

Message from the Chairman

Dear Friends, welcome to the 2023 Spring Newsletter.

Summer is showing in the garden at last. The roses are now starting to flower - about time too! It feels like we've had a long winter followed by a rather chilly spring.

The AGM in February was very well attended and we were delighted to welcome Gosport's MP Dame Caroline Dinenage, our Gosport Mayor Worshipful Cllr Jamie Hutchinson plus our local Cllrs Philip Raffaelli and Alan Scard. During the meeting we voted in a small change to the Friends' constitution to make online banking easier. We were so pleased that Guy Sitwell agreed to become Membership secretary - taking over from long serving Ginny Whelan. The head gardeners then treated us all to a slide show, reminding us of just how beautiful and important the garden is.

The minutes of the 2023 AGM are now available to read on our new website.

We had wonderful weather for our May plant sale which really brought out the crowds! Lots of people lingered over their tea and cakes and made a day of it. The garden looked its best and we were able to give a generous cheque to the National Garden Scheme towards their worthy charities.

There is a lot to look forward to with the garden party at the end of June and the Michaelmas Fair and Gosport Heritage Days in September.

Please come and join us - we always need your support!

Elaine Martin



Dates for your Diary

Saturday 24th June

Friends' Annual Garden Party
Crescent Garden from 6pm to 8pm
Booking form enclosed

Saturday 9th & 16th September

Gosport Heritage Open Days
Two historical tours of the garden

Saturday 23rd September

Michaelmas Fair

Autumn Talk at Parish Centre

Details to follow

www.alverstokecrescentgardens.co.uk

Head Gardeners' Report

The weather has continued to challenge us this year with substantial rainfall, but we have managed to proceed with some new planting, some of which is to replace victims of the harsh frosts. We lost most of our heritage scented pelargoniums this Winter and have purchased a number of replacement ones from a local nursery. These will be planted in CG once the risk of frost is over. Despite putting fleece on the Echiums for most of the Winter some of these plants died but we still have several survivors. However, another casualty of the heavy and prolonged frosts in early December were the Lions Tail shrubs (*Leonotis leonurus*).

The snowdrops are beginning to naturalise and looked particularly good around the blue cedar in the East end of the garden and they are defying the odds under the beech tree, together with the winter aconites. This year we have bought and planted another 500 snowdrops, 200 aconites corms and 200 bluebell bulbs in the green, in addition to established plants being divided and planted in various beds around CG.

One of our major bugbears in CG is the dying off of the ivy along Terrace Walk and the development of rat runs caused by both two-legged and four-legged visitors. We have been trying to counter this by both ground cover and defensive planting. Hence, we have bought and planted Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*), ferns (*Dryopteris filix mas*), Common Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Spanish gorse (*Genista hispanica*), Flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) and Fuchsia-Flowered Gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*).

The box hedge has largely managed to hold its own against the box moth caterpillar, thanks to repeated spraying last year. However, it



has failed in some areas due to a combination of the stress of the box moth caterpillar, box blight and the location under the cedars, so we have had to remove it. Rather than replacing it with more box, which would doubtless face the same stresses, it has been decided, together with GBC, to replace it with yew. This will be done in due course. Unfortunately, it will look odd for quite a while, but we are left with little alternative.

On Wednesday 5th April we found the first box moth caterpillar had emerged and further caterpillar activity along the length of the hedge was in evidence, so spraying has been scheduled for the next week.

Tulips are now beginning to appear and although not as prolific as last year are beginning to look lovely in the more formal beds. We didn't plant any new tulip bulbs last autumn, choosing to wait and see how last year's perform again. We will probably order more later in the year, once we know what has re-performed and where there are deficiencies.



Disintegrating polytunnels!

Down on the allotment, GT members have worked to make the polytunnel watertight again, after the extremely hot summer completely broke down the plastic and the damage was compounded by the winter winds and rain. A range of seeds were sown and cuttings taken both for the garden and the Plant Sale.

Research and negotiation is ongoing to find an appropriate specialist to replace the timer and service the fountain. This has been far from straightforward and we hope a resolution to the matter will soon be found.

It has been decided that the Pittisporum towards the eastern end of the garden will not be replaced and that the bed will be grassed over to maintain the naturalistic aspect and vista between the cedars.

Irene Buggle and Ginny Whelen



A well-earned Wednesday morning tea-break!

Garden Volunteers



Garden Fever

I must go down to the garden now, to the lovely trees and grass,
And all I ask are some flowers there and a path to let us pass;
The volunteers are working there, it must be we'n'sday morn;
Some are digging flower beds and others trim the lawn.

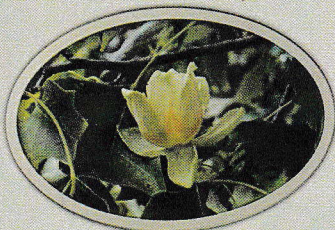
I must go down to the garden now, to hear the birds all sing,
There's a wild call and a clear call; the birds are on the wing;
And all I ask is a sunny day with a few white clouds above
To be in a local garden with all the things I love.

Rita Rundle - with apologies to John Masefield

Do come to the garden on any Wednesday morning and see what the volunteers are doing - probably something very similar to what is described above!

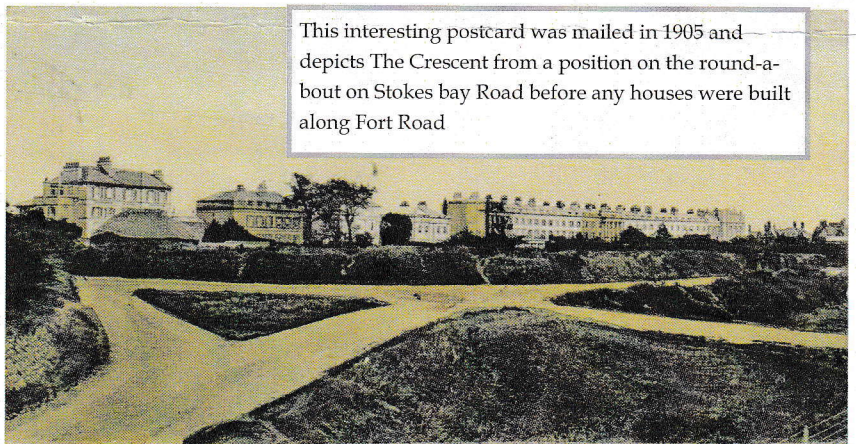
Rita Rundle, with the help of Martina Geeson, has produced a lovely booklet titled "A Year in Crescent Garden" which contains a history of the garden as well as a collection of her monthly observations that have appeared in Gosport Choice. The books are £5 each - check the website for more details.

A Year in Crescent Garden



Friends of Crescent Garden

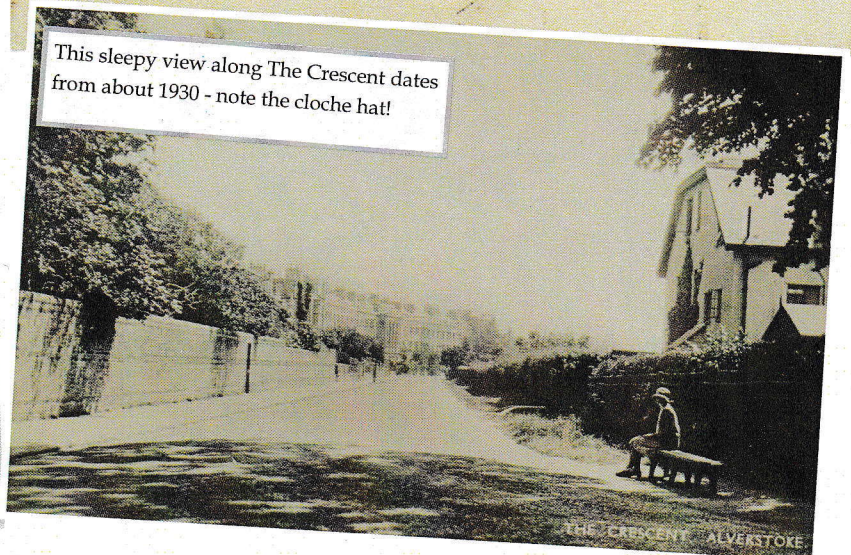
This interesting postcard was mailed in 1905 and depicts The Crescent from a position on the round-about on Stokes bay Road before any houses were built along Fort Road



Gosport

The Crescent, Stokes Bay.

This sleepy view along The Crescent dates from about 1930 - note the cloche hat!



THE CRESCENT, ALVERSTOKE

Some glimpses of the garden...



Coronation Day in
The Crescent



A delicious array
of cakes at the
plant sale in May



Tom raising the
Green Flag

JOIN THE FRIENDS!

For all membership enquiries contact Guy Sitwell at gusitwell@btinternet.com
Any other enquiries contact Gina Rowe on 02392 358207