



# FRIENDS OF CRESCENT GARDEN SPRING NEWSLETTER 2019

## Message from the Chairman

Dear Friends

Spring has sprung at last and, although it hasn't been a particularly cold winter, it has seemed to me to be a very long one! Crescent Garden is already bursting into life with the new planting we are undertaking. I especially love the many and various shades of pale green on show as plants come into leaf.

The AGM in February went really well with a very good attendance and we were delighted to welcome three new members to the committee - Trevor Barker, Maureen Bell and Ginny Day. The future of the garden is set fair with so much support from you all. I invite you to read the minutes which are now available on our website.

We've included some fliers with this newsletter for our annual garden party in June, the spring outing to Neasden Hindu Temple and a reminder about our plant sale in May.

I look forward to seeing you all throughout the year.

*Elaine Martin*



## Dates for your Diary

**Sunday 12th May - Spring Visit**  
Visit to Neasden Hindu Temple & Gardens  
*Booking form enclosed with this newsletter*

**Saturday 22nd June 6pm to 8pm**  
Friends' Garden Party at Crescent Garden  
*Booking form enclosed*

**Annual Plant Sale Saturday 18th May 10am to 4pm**

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*

[www.alverstokecrescentgardens.co.uk](http://www.alverstokecrescentgardens.co.uk)

# Head Gardeners' Report

The first year for the new quartet of head gardeners, namely Stef Fisher, Sharon Miles, Gina Rowe and Irene Buggle, has been marked by a year of extremes. Despite the 'Beast from the East' in February/March 2018, followed by the hottest Summer on record, a very mild Autumn 2018 and Gales in Winter 2019, the Garden is looking remarkably unscathed.

Although Crescent Garden did well in the Green Flag Award and South and Southeast in Bloom in 2018, the overall takeaway message from the judges was to ask what we did to maintain diversity, conservation and wildlife in the Garden. Thus we commissioned a local wildlife expert to conduct a survey of the wildlife in the Garden. The survey recommended a range of small bird, insect and hedgehog boxes. Gosport Shed craftsmen made a number of boxes for the Green Team, ready for putting in the Garden in early Spring 2019. We are glad to say that we have noted various birds making their nests in the boxes already! David Palmer who has looked after our compost and shed area for a number of years has also been increasing our capacity to make more compost for the Garden with a number of new compost bins.

Last Autumn Dave Stubington, GBC's arborist, completed his annual tree survey and identified a number of bay trees for removal and specimen trees for crown pruning, which will help increase the light to areas along Crescent Walk and help us develop the brash area at the East end of the garden into a bluebell wood. This work should be carried out during 2019.

The drip line system was extended to the horseshoe area around the fountain, which should help with keeping the roses and shrubs in this key area well watered during the summer months. Sarah Palmer has conducted a review of the roses in the Garden and identified a number of in-date roses. These were planted in December 2018 and are doing well. Roses purchased included Rosa 'Fabvier', 'Rose du Roi', 'Stanwell Perpetual' and Rosa pimpinellifolia.

In February 2019, 1000 Snowdrops and 1000 Bluebells in the green were planted in various beds and areas at the West end of the garden. Trish and Brian Kelly very generously paid for the Snowdrops and Bluebells in honour of their 50th Wedding anniversary. Thank you so much to them both.

During March a number of wild primroses, cowslips and Vinca were planted in a few areas along Crescent Walk. We are delighted to report that the Ribes speciosum planted just inside the West gate in 2018 is now in flower and looking really pretty with its small red fuschia-like blooms. Other stars of the Spring are the Epimediums in the bed under the new Tulip Tree and the Magnolia denudata at the far West end. However, there are so many real gems in the garden at the moment, such as Snakes Head Fritillarias, Dogs tooth violets (*Erythronium dens canis*), Tulips and many more.

*Irene Buggle, Stef Fisher, Sharon Miles and Gina Rowe*



## Garden Volunteers

### **O What a Beautiful Morning (in Crescent Garden)**

*There's a bright golden haze on the treetops, There's a bright golden haze on the treetops'*

*The wisteria's high as an elephant's eye, And it looks like its climbing right up to the sky.*

*Oh what a beautiful morning, Oh what a beautiful day, We've got a wonderful feeling, Everything's going our way.*

*All the plants growing well in the sunshine, All the plants growing well in the sunshine,*

*The fountain is glitt'ring as we all pass by, And a robin is watching with her beady eye.*

*All the sounds of the earth are like music, All the sounds of the earth are like music,*

*The breeze is so busy it don't miss a tree, And it's great to feel healthy and happy and free.*

*And it's great to feel healthy and happy and free.*

Let's hope we get some glorious summer weather to enjoy the peace and beauty of Crescent Garden and give a lift to our mood just like the song suggests!

*Rita Rundle*

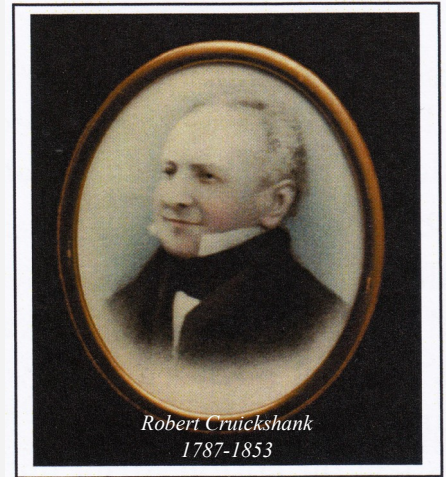
# Garden Cuttings - The Remarkable Mr Cruickshank

Nineteen year old Robert Cruickshank, the son of sugar planters in the West Indies, arrived in Gosport in 1806 to join a firm of attorneys in Clarence Square, having studied law in Montreal, Canada. The nation was still celebrating Lord Nelson's famous victory at Trafalgar in October of the previous year and Gosport was becoming increasingly important as a centre of naval activity. Clarence square was the most elite part of the fortified town then, its tall elegant Georgian buildings confined inside the ramparts - many of which were the homes of senior naval officers.

Cruickshank, a man of extraordinary energy and vision soon became involved in numerous projects around the town but, of course, is best known for developing the curved terrace known today as "The Crescent". He admired the neo-classical architecture in places like Bath, Weymouth and Brighton and determined to create a watering place and spa at the eastern end of Alverstoke. He purchased Danner's Farm at his own expense and, remarkably, appointed 21 year old Thomas Ellis Owen as his architect and contractor.

The original plan was for two half crescents either side of North Terrace (St. Mark's Road) with a hotel in the centre. Unfortunately the development, for all its grandeur and elegance, was not a financial success and only the western half was constructed - being completed in 1828 - the hotel being added in 1830.

Cruickshank invited the Marquess of Anglesey, who he had met at Haslar Hospital recuperating after having lost a leg at the battle of Waterloo, to open his new spa. In the event the Marquess was taken ill and the stone was laid by his son, the Earl of Uxbridge, the first house being named Uxbridge House. For many years it was assumed that the Marquess had laid the stone in person and it was not until 104 years later that a letter of apology for absence was found in an old writing desk belonging to the Cruickshank family. Beautiful gardens were laid out on the southern side and residents were charged 30 shillings per year for a private key, and for many years, on the 30th September, one of the Cruickshanks would sit at the gate to collect the rent.



Robert Cruickshank  
1787-1853

Captain Charles Austen and his second wife Harriet lived at No. 2. He was the younger of Jane Austen's two sailor brothers and is said to have given a speech in honour of Robert Cruickshank whilst dining at the Anglesey Hotel in 1839. Jane Austen's elder sister Cassandra didn't die until 1845 and would almost certainly have visited her brother here from time to time. Jane, of course, died in 1817 (aged just 41) some 10 years or so before The Crescent was built.

It's difficult to imagine how the Anglesey area would look today had it not been blessed with Cruickshank's vision.

*Richard Martin*



This interesting photo, taken from a drone operated by Ian Drummond, shows the layout of the garden in conjunction with The Crescent. You can see the footprint of the bath house and the ellipse of the original garden design by Thomas Ellis Owen. Note the church tower in the distance.



The Friends' Christmas party  
hosted by Rita and Bill Rundle



Rita - 80 years young!

Thank you to Sarah and Kate for doing such a wonderful job decorating our tree at the St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival.



FRIENDS OF CRESCENT GARDEN

# Other news this winter...



A big thank you to Richard Martin for repeating his talk - 'Alverstone Past & Present' - another sell-out at the Parish Centre in January



Thank you to the men from Gosport Shed for the bird boxes and insect hotels



Dave Palmer, Ed Ball and Andrew Torrance turning the compost



Rose maintenance - a thorny problem!



Sharon and Stephanie helping to install the new irrigation system - roll on Summer!



A profusion of snowdrops!



There's always weeding to do!



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## JOIN THE FRIENDS!

For all membership enquiries contact Ginny Whelan at [virginia@fridaywhelan.plus.com](mailto:virginia@fridaywhelan.plus.com)  
Any other enquiries contact Gina Rowe on 02392 358207