

FRIENDS OF NEWTON ARBORETUM

Newsletter No. 11: Jan 2022



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INTRODUCTION

This is our eleventh Newsletter to update Friends with progress and to pass on news and information about future activities. As we have said before, if you have interesting things you have seen in the arboretum or have views or ideas on how it should be developed, please contact Roger Wilkins or any other member of the Committee.

In the last Newsletter we said that the year had been unlike any previous year. As we all know, covid is unfortunately still with us. We have, however, been able to keep the arboretum open throughout and with high visitor numbers the arboretum has continued to make an important contribution to the wellbeing of our community.

We have a tremendous team of volunteers, but would always appreciate offers from Friends who would be prepared to help with maintenance and other tasks in the arboretum. Please contact David Vallance.

If you could join our rota of Volunteer Wardens, please contact Roger Wilkins. The duties are not arduous, and involve making an inspection walk around the Arboretum a couple of times during a nominated week on about four occasions during the year and reporting any problems you see to one of the officers of the Friends.

The next AGM is planned for Wed, 1 June

COMMITTEE

Chairman	Andrew Gee (851164)
Vice Chair	Gill Melling (851887)
Secretary	Roger Wilkins (851337)
Treasurer	Peter Watts (851369)
Head Warden	David Vallance (851266)
Committee	Cathy Yates (851327), Vaughan Gallavan (851589); Geoff Jackson (851551); Deborah January (851193); Ron Nethercott (851372); Marg and Courtney Ware (851741); Sue Browne (851460, representing the Church); Damien Hodge (851111, representing Parish Council); John Quicke (851627, Owner)

During 2021 Geoff Jackson retired from the position of Vice Chair, but agreed to continue as a Committee Member, with Gill Melling taking over as Vice Chair.

ACTIVITIES AND REPORT FOR 2021

The continued covid pandemic made planning for various activities a difficult task. Our AGM was postponed from May to the end of June, but was then held successfully entirely in the Arboretum. Tours were led by Peter Hopkin and by Vaughan Gallavan and featured birds and trees respectively. These were followed by the formal AGM, an outdoor meeting.

The next major event was the performance in the Arboretum on 10 July of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* by the Crediton Arts Centre. This was a sell out and a great success. A second theatre performance was planned for August, with 'Rustle' to be put on by Paddleboat Theatre in a joint venture with the Parish Hall. Unfortunately a thunderstorm was forecast, so we relocated the event to the Parish Hall. Provided the weather is good, the Arboretum is a great venue for performances like this and we hope to be able to offer some outdoor theatre again in 2022.

Karen Dudley writes elsewhere in this Newsletter about the 'Moving Outside from the Inside' group that meets regularly in the Arboretum.

Our volunteers have continued to keep the arboretum in good order. With a lot of old trees, it isn't surprising that we have a few casualties. An English Oak was uprooted in bad weather and we took down some holm oaks that showed signs of bad decay. The cost of felling and clearance was £1400, but fortunately we had good reserves to meet this cost.

There is now a bit more open space and we are planning some further tree planting. Vaughan has an English walnut, spindle tree, service tree and wych elm ready to plant and plans for more.

At the AGM the possibility was raised of restoring the pond that formerly existed at the lower end of the arboretum. This would provide a different habitat and the open water would encourage more birds. Subsequent to the AGM, Peter Hopkin and Paul Buckley developed a wildlife plan for us. This is being considered and developed further by the Committee.



We were able to have a Coffee Morning in the Parish Hall in October. This was very well attended and proved to be both a good social occasion and a good fund raiser.

Despite the restrictions and reduced activities, the number of Friends has remained over 120 and we have welcomed a number of new Friends. The financial contribution from subscriptions is important, particularly with the high and rather unpredictable costs of tree work and the limited opportunities during the last

year for fundraising activities. The help and support of Friends also gives much encouragement to the Officers and Committee.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

The Crediton Arts Centre performance of the Merry Wives of Windsor on the afternoon of 10 July received acclaim from the sell-out audience of 90 people. The cast of 15, led by Laurence Honeysett as Sir John Falstaff with Beth Robson and Tracey Wills as Merry Wives, and their two musicians produced an enthusiastic, polished and humorous production of Shakespeare's comedy in the delightful surroundings of the arboretum.



Falstaff with the Merry Wives

Many thanks to the tremendous cast, to Jack Robson from the Arts Centre who produced and directed the play and had also proposed that a performance be held in the arboretum, and to our helpers from the Friends of the Arboretum. We even had the weather on our side with a dry and warm afternoon.

MOVING OUTSIDE FROM THE INSIDE (by Karen Dudley)



This group has met weekly in the Arboretum since September 2020. The group, inspired by the practice of Authentic Movement, invites participants to move freely, guided by internal sensations, movement impulses and the inner wisdom of the body.

Bringing mindful attention to the landscape of the Arboretum (the outside) we take time to pause and connect with our internal landscape and experience (the inside).

Inviting our internal landscape to move our bodies, opens us to the possibility of new understandings, and gives a delicious freedom of expression. The group supports each other through compassionate, non-judgmental witnessing as the movement unfolds. We are also supported by all that is around us: the changing seasons, the earth, the air, the trees, the weather, the textures, the smells.....

We have really appreciated the beautiful natural environment of the arboretum and the opportunity it offers to breathe with the trees. Thank you to all the volunteers who have made this precious space available to be enjoyed by all in the community.

If you are curious to find out more about this group and would like a chat, please feel free to contact Karen: karendudley@live.co.uk.

FUTURE EVENTS

We have a couple of dates for the diary already, and hope to be able to fix more - covid permitting. Look forward to seeing you!

Coffee Morning Sat 12 Feb at 10.30 am in the Parish Hall.

Arboretum Tours and AGM Wed 1 June evening

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions make a very important contribution to our funds and the help that we have from Friends is crucial for the well-being and development of the arboretum. Our financial year starts on 1 Jan, so subscriptions (£10 annually) are now due. Most of our Friends pay by standing order - so thanks very much for your new subscription! For those paying by cash or cheque (payable to Friends of Newton Arboretum), please could you let Peter Watts (1 Godolphin Close, Newton St Cyres, Exeter EX5 5BZ) have your subscription. Let Peter know if you would like a Standing Order form. They are also at the back of the Arboretum Leaflet, available from dispensers in the Hall Car Park and in the arboretum. Friends still have the perk of being able to take wood and bamboo canes from the arboretum, if available. Please contact David Vallance if you are wishing to take wood.

THANKS

The Committee thanks all the Friends for their support during the year. We thank David Vallance for overseeing work on the ground, and our Honorary Friends, Courtney and Margaret Ware and Ron Nethercott, for the many hours that they have spent in the Arboretum. Cathy Yate and Ron have continued to share the rather unpleasant task of emptying the dog poo bin. Our rota of volunteer wardens are thanked for coming round during their duty weeks and providing fresh pairs of eyes to check that all is well. Vaughan Gallavan provides crucial expertise on our trees and Peter Watts looks after our finances so well. Roger Wilkins has continued to co-ordinate the Friends and the whole effort is steered by our Chairman, Andrew Gee. We much appreciate the help by the Church, in particular for allowing access through the Churchyard, and the Parish Council for their support and provision of insurance cover.

Finally, many thanks to John Quicke for all his support and allowing access to this fine Arboretum.

Photographs were provided by Ann Cordingley, Karen Dudley, Vaughan Gallavan, Peter Hawksley, Geoff Jackson and Jean Wilkins.

Ron, Courtney and Marg our three Honorary Friends and ace helpers



Enjoy the Arboretum!



Photograph taken from a drone in 2017



A delightful mix of celandines, primroses and bluebells