

FRIENDS OF NEWTON ARBORETUM

Newsletter No. 12: Jan 2023



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INTRODUCTION

This is our twelfth January Newsletter to keep Friends up to date with progress and to pass on news and information about future activities. As we have said before, if you have seen interesting things in the Arboretum or have ideas on how we should develop the Arboretum, please contact Roger Wilkins or any other member of the Committee.

Although there is still a lot of covid around, this has been a rather more relaxed year with an increased number of activities. The Arboretum has been open through the year. The number of visitors has been high and we have had many appreciative comments about the Arboretum and its contribution to our community.

We have a tremendous team of volunteers and have had a number of successful working parties. We would always appreciate further offers from Friends prepared to help with maintenance and other tasks. 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 Thurs 8 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)

ACTIVITIES AND REPORT FOR 2022

This has been a busy year for our volunteers and much has been achieved both in regular maintenance and in new planting. The number of Friends has increased each year and is now 140. Your support is crucial and much appreciated.

Early in the year the Wildlife Plan developed by Peter Hopkin and Paul Buckley was

adopted. This had three main elements - the development of a pond and wet habitat at the far end of the Arboretum, the inclusion of more native trees in new plantings and the need to control invasive laurels. The development of the pond is on hold, but progress has been made with the planting of native trees (see later) and a start was made in December on the clearance of laurels.

The dry summer weather produced a challenge for trees that had been planted in the last two years and considerable watering was done to keep them alive and growing. This was initially undertaken by Harriet and Jamie McFadzean alone, but then we established a rota of Friends who did weekly watering through to the end of September. Many thanks to all involved and also to the Church for letting us take water from a tap in the churchyard. We will be buying further lengths of hosepipe, so that more of the Arboretum can be watered without carrying watering cans. The trees responded positively to the watering.

The working parties held in May are described in the next section.

We much appreciated the donation of a new bench. This was funded from the proceeds of a village event held to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen. Also, one of the newly-planted trees will be dedicated to Queen Elizabeth.





The Platinum Jubilee Memorial Bench

In mid November eight Friends planted a total of 500 daffodil bulbs in the Arboretum. These were donated via the Parish Council in an initiative by Allies Mid Devon to plant 130,000 bulbs (daffodils and narcissus) across Mid Devon to acknowledge and remember lives lost during the covid pandemic. Allies Mid Devon is a volunteer organisation that promotes conservation, protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment in Mid Devon.

A number of events were organised by the Friends. Two tours were held in the Arboretum on 1 June prior to the AGM in the Parish Hall.



Tours on the AGM evening showing group at start of the tours (left) and Vaughan Gallavan talking about the trees (right)

The tour led by Vaughan Gallavan looked at the recently-planted trees, whilst that led by Roger Wilkins focussed more on the management of the Arboretum, looking at 'challenges and opportunities'.

Coffee mornings held in the Parish Hall on 12 Feb and 22 Oct were well attended, proving to be both enjoyable social occasions and good fund raisers. We had hoped to host more open-air theatre in the Arboretum, but this was postponed to 2023 (see below).

The group 'Moving Outside from the Inside', led by Karen Dudley, continued to meet each Friday morning and I have received emails from members of the group who much appreciate the experience. Karen writes:

It's possible you might have seen us there and been curious about what was happening. We take time to breathe, to feel our connection to the earth and the environment and guided by internal sensations/movement impulses and the inner wisdom of the body we allow movement to unfold. We move in all seasons and weather and offer each other holding and witnessing and the chance to be seen without judgement, just as we are in the moment. We are so thankful to continue to be in this beautiful space to explore the practice of embodied movement in the environment. If you are curious and would like to find out more please feel free to contact me at KarenDudley@live.co.uk.

WORKING PARTIES

Working parties were held on the mornings of 9 and 23 April, with 15 and 9 Friends participating on the two dates. Friends came well equipped with gloves, loppers, pruning saws, spades and other implements and were directed to various tasks by David Vallance. Much of the work involved trimming the sides of paths, clearing overhanging branches and removal of brambles under trees. Particular attention was given to clearance around the bamboos, camellias, magnolias and other specimen trees, Many elderberries were dug up. The beds around the Summerhouse were tidied up, as was the hydrangea area just inside the gate.

Further working parties will be held in the Spring. Many thanks to all who helped and to David for organising the work.

TREE PLANTING

Vaughan Gallavan provides an update on tree planting

Planting opportunities in the Arboretum mostly present themselves when unwanted vegetation is cleared or when over-mature trees become dangerous and either fall or are felled because of safety concerns. *Quercus ilex*, the Holly Oak, are present in larger numbers than any other tree in the Arboretum, but many are in decline.

These Holly Oaks helped to create shelter along the boundaries for the exotic trees within their confines to thrive. The area close to the Lookout has in recent years seen the demise of a mature native oak and of three Holly Oaks. A spectacular view of undulating farmland and the mixed forest splendour of Newton Woods has been revealed. However, the protection that these old trees provided has gone and work has begun with the long-term objective of 'filling the gap'.

Early in December 2022 three native oaks and three Scots Pine were planted with a view to these becoming specimen trees in years to come. Further to this planting, a selection of smaller native trees and shrubs will be grown in between to reestablish the wind break and enhance the boundary environment for wildlife. The choices will be, Field Maple, Rowan, Wild Service, Spindle, Guelder-rose, Hawthorn and Crab Apple. These will be protected in tree tubes, which will be removed once the plants are established. A very large spreading Portugal Laurel currently functions as a windbreak and this may be removed once the native plants are well established.

Planting of more exotic trees will be limited this season to a *Nyssa sinensis*, a *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, to join another planted last year, and some magnolias. A new site has been cleared just beyond the Summerhouse. This was done mainly to gain a view of Magnolia 'Peter Veitch' which was otherwise obscured by Laurels. This will become a good site for some lower-growing shrubs once the laurel stumps have been removed.

We received welcome donations for the purchase of some of the new trees, A Japanese rowan is in memory of Roy Beckett and one of the recently-planted oaks is in memory of Jack and Lena-Maud Tucker.



*Vaughan Gallavan
with Alison Neely
and Jenny Tucker
planting memorial
oak*

We hope for more rain over the next growing season than we had in the last and are indebted to the volunteer watering team that kept trees alive during the drought.

FUTURE EVENTS

There are some dates in the diary already and we will fix more. We look forward to seeing you:

Coffee Morning Sat 11 Feb at 10.30 am in the Parish Hall.

Visit to Isle Barton near Chard Thurs 13 April, morning. *This visit will be hosted by Bob Chard, a Friend of the Arboretum, and will feature his plantation of more than 50 tree species in a Somerset Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve. Bob contributed to our last AGM and gave an introduction to his plantation and his work looking for suitable trees to replace tropical hardwood imports.*

Arboretum Tours and AGM Thurs 8 June, evening

Shakespeare in the Arboretum. 'Much Ado about Nothing'. *Performance by Crediton Arts Centre. Date in June still to be fixed.*

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions make a very important contribution to our funds and the help that we have from Friends is crucial for the wellbeing 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. Please 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.

THANKS

The Committee thanks all the Friends for their support during the year. There has been a fantastic effort by our volunteers to maintain the Arboretum in such good condition. This has been led by our Head Warden, David Vallance, and our three Honorary Friends, Marg and Courtney Ware and Ron Nethercott. 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. Many Friends have helped through Working parties, watering trees and running the coffee mornings. 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.

Photographs were taken by the late Roy Beckett, Gail Meldrum, Jean Wilkins and Will Roberts, Helmores Estate Agents,

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

Enjoy the Arboretum!



Aerial view of Arboretum taken by Helmores Estate Agents in late Autumn, 2022