

# FRIENDS OF NEWTON ARBORETUM

## *Newsletter No. 4: Jan 2015*



*Autumn 2014 Magnolia fruits*

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### INTRODUCTION

Here is our fourth Newsletter, to keep Friends up to date with progress and pass on news and information about future activities. If you have comments on interesting things you have seen in the Arboretum or have views or ideas on how we should develop the Arboretum, please contact Roger Wilkins or any other member of the Committee.

Volunteers who would be prepared to help with working parties or maintenance are always welcome, and should contact David Vallance. If anyone is able to join the Warden Rota (which involves making an inspection walk around the Arboretum a couple of times during a nominated week on about three weeks during the year), then please contact Roger Wilkins.

**The next AGM will be on Wednesday 22 April. See below for details.**

## COMMITTEE

Chairman: Isobel Hepworth (851351)  
Vice Chairman: Andrew Gee (851164)  
Secretary: Roger Wilkins (851337)  
Treasurer: Peter Watts (851369)  
Head Warden: David Vallance (851266)  
Committee: Vaughan Gallavan (851589); Geoff Jackson (851551); Ron Nethercott (851372); Tim Sedgwick (851223, representing Parish Council); John Quicke (851627, Owner)

The Committee thank Bill Holt for his great contribution to the Committee as the Church representative until his untimely death. Andrew Gee now acts as the Church representative, in addition to being Vice Chairman. We thank Ann Dean and Ian Hole who left the Committee at the AGM, but are still involved with the Arboretum and welcome Ron Nethercott as a new Committee Member

## REPORT ON 2014

This has again been a busy and successful year for the Arboretum. It didn't start too well with gales during the winter bringing down several conifers at the far end of the Arboretum and major branches off several other trees. Fortunately these were almost all well away from our paths and did not affect any of our specimen trees.

After several years in which our attention was devoted to reducing shading to improve the condition of our more important trees, we generated sufficient space for planting a few new and replacement species in the Autumn. The new trees are described later in this Newsletter. In addition to some tree planting, we decided to plant more bulbs in the grassy areas of the Arboretum. The bulbs planted, and the very successful Bulb Morning, are also described later.



*Discussions with Bill Crumbie of Greentrees*

In November five misshapen but tall hollies were taken down by Greentrees. These trees had suffered by growing closely to the Leylandii that were felled two years ago, and had not recovered their form. This has enhanced the appearance of the Arboretum and created some space for re-planting with more interesting trees. Greentrees also took down two conifers that had suffered in the gales and some additional branches that we considered to be safety hazards.

We produced a revised edition of the descriptive Arboretum Leaflet early in the year. Some 500 of these Leaflets are taken each year from the dispensers in the Arboretum and in the Parish Hall Car Park, indicating that we are having a lot of new visitors. We also revised the leaflet describing the Information Trail and now have an improved and printed version. Navigation around the Trail is now much easier with direction arrows produced and installed by Geoff Jackson. Direction finding around the Arboretum more generally has been helped by the naming and labelling of paths by Courtney and Margaret Ware and Ron Nethercott.



The Friends have been involved in several events during the year. There was very good attendance at the talk given by Caradoc Doy on 'Victorian Plant Collectors' that was held in March, jointly with the Gardening Club and the History Group. We also benefited from Caradoc walking around the Arboretum and then donating to us two specimens of *Viburnum rhytidophyllum*. We already had one, but you need three for the flowers to be fertilised and produce colourful berries. The AGM and tour in April was attended by more than 40 people, producing a large and interested group for Vaughan Gallavan to steer around the Arboretum. Our display at the Revels in June attracted a lot of attention.

Several events were held to make funds for the Arboretum. In February, David Coard and a team from Newton House arranged a Cheese and Wine Evening with proceeds for the Arboretum and we also received the proceeds from a Bingo evening at the Parish Hall, thanks to Joyce Rook and her helpers. These events were followed by our staffing the Car Boot at Matford with the Cricket Club in April and a very successful Coffee Morning in the Parish Hall in June. We thank the Friends and others who helped with and supported these events, which contributed over £800 to our funds.





*Wedding photograph in the Arboretum*



*Coffee morning*

## BULB PLANTING

Some 16 Friends made the biggest Arboretum Working Party to date on 18 Oct. The focus was on bulb planting, but the big turn-out meant that we were able to do quite a number of other jobs in the Arboretum, under the guidance of David Vallance. Several dead tree limbs identified during a Safety Inspection were removed. A start was made to levelling and improvement of the 'Oak Tree' path and removing the large clump of Eleagnus that was smothering a cherry. Both these tasks were subsequently completed by Ron Nethercott and Courtney and Marg Ware. Geoff Jackson, with help, re-bedded the signs for the Information Trail.



Bulbs were planted in the relatively clear upper areas of the Arboretum from the redwoods through to the Tulip tree (near the picnic area) and the weeping spruce. We planted (i) three different species of *Camassia*, sometimes called wild hyacinth, which have blue or white flowers late in the Spring, (ii) both purple and white varieties of the delicate bell-shaped *Fritillarias* and (iii) the small blue *Chionodoxa*. They were either scattered or put in small clumps all at rather low planting densities. We will be interested in seeing how they grow and spread and have been discussing with the School the possibility of the children monitoring their development over the years. We expect to be extending the area for bulb planting next year.

## TREE PLANTING

The increased area of open space created over the last two years at the top end of the Arboretum has given us opportunity for planting some new trees. Vaughan Gallavan steered the Committee to the selection of species that would enhance the Arboretum. He then sourced the trees and undertook the planting, with most of the trees being planted in late Autumn. Vaughan comments below on the trees planted and the contribution they will make to the Arboretum:

We have planted two **Paper Bark Maples**, *Acer griseum*, close to an older Paper Bark Maple that had suffered shade damage from the Leyland cypress. These small trees have wonderful mahogany-coloured peeling bark throughout the year and good Autumn shades.

There are already a large number of Japanese Maples throughout the Arboretum. *Acer palmatum* 'Sango-kaku', **Coral Bark Maple**, will be a fine contrasting addition to these. Its bare twigs are red through the Winter, its foliage colourful and fine through Spring and Summer and, like many maples, the Autumn show is very good.

Also with very spectacular bark and good Autumn colour is *Prunus serrula*. This **flowering cherry** will add to the existing collection of cherries which seem to thrive in the Arboretum.

There has only been one representative of the **Dogwood** family in the Arboretum to date, *Cornus mas*, of which we have a very fine specimen. *Cornus kousa* var *chinensis* will extend our collection of this diverse and beautiful genus. It is a handsome plant in the Spring, when it blooms with large creamy bracts, and it also adds to the Autumn pallet.

**Witch hazel** varieties come with a range of colourful 'spidery' Winter flowers. There are various shades of red and orange and in the case of *Hamamelis mollis pallida* they are a striking pale yellow. This will make a large scented shrub which will herald the arrival of Spring, albeit in January.

*Stewartia pseudocamellia* **Koreana** is a fairly large tree that will be good to view in all seasons. Its Spring flowers are similar to Camellia, its Autumn colour is very good, but perhaps its most striking feature is the stem, which is colourfully dappled and flakey throughout the year.

Within the last two years we lost a treasure of the Arboretum, a large specimen of *Cercidophyllum japonicum*, the **Katsura tree**. Perhaps the most extraordinary feature of this tree is the scent from the leaves as they fall in the Autumn. As well as being a good colour, they have the scent of burnt sugar or candy floss. The replacement tree will be planted in the vicinity of the old one, but in a more open site above a path.

**Magnolia 'Yellow Bird'** will be planted next Spring after the risk of late frosts. This will add another colour to the Magnolia collection. It flowers later in the season when the leaves are out and will make quite a large tree.

*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, **Dawn Redwood**, is an unusual coniferous tree and one of a few that lose their foliage in the Winter. It will eventually make a very large tree producing delicate feathery foliage turning pleasing shades in the Autumn.

## **AGM 2015**

The AGM for Friends will be held on Wednesday 22 April 2015. This will again involve a visit to the Arboretum followed by a meeting in the Parish Hall. For the Arboretum visit, you will be able to choose one of two alternative tours. The first tour will be led by Frances Watkins and will give an insight to the mosses, lichens and liverworts in the Arboretum. She will be bringing hand lenses so that you will be able to see some of the beautiful tiny features of these plants. Frances is a botanist from Oxford who is a Friend of the Arboretum and has prepared an inventory of both lower and higher plants in the Arboretum. Her connection with the Arboretum arose from her being the sister of our Chairman. The second tour will be led by Vaughan Gallavan (who needs no introduction) and this will highlight the new trees that have been planted in the Arboretum this autumn.

We will assemble in the Parish Hall Car Park by 6.30 pm. Afterwards there will be tea, cake and biscuits in the Village Hall and then the AGM will be held, to include election of the Committee as well as a review of progress and a discussion of future plans.

## **OTHER FUTURE EVENTS**

There are quite a number of events coming up to provide interest and, hopefully, some funds for the Arboretum. We do hope you will be able to support these events.

**Sun 15 Feb Car Boot** sale at Matford. Jointly with the Cricket Club, we have to provide 12 people to look after this event - but we are guaranteed at least £400 between the two organisations. There is an early start, but it's quite good fun. If you are able to help, please contact David Vallance on 851266.

**Mon 16 Feb Bingo** for Arboretum funds with 'eyes down' at 7.45 pm. The more folks that attend, the more money for the Arboretum! There will be a raffle for which we provide prizes. If you have a potential prize to spare, please let Roger Wilkins or any other member of the Committee have it before the day.

**Sat 20 June Mid-summer celebration in Arboretum** We will hold this event jointly with the Parish Hall and the Church. It will probably be in the evening and involve musical entertainment and bring your own food and drink, but more details later. This will be a first for the Arboretum and should be a real fun occasion.

**Sat 3 Oct Coffee Morning** in the Parish Hall



## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

We now have over 60 subscribing Friends. 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. 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 just in the Arboretum. Remember that Friends still have a couple of perks - bamboo canes and wood from the Arboretum. Please contact David Vallance if you are wishing to take wood.

## **THANKS**

The Committee thank all the Friends for their support during the year. Thanks go to the Volunteer Wardens and to those who have helped with working parties. Thanks go to David Vallance for overseeing on the ground, and Courtney and Margaret Ware and Ron Nethercott for their excellent work and many hours that they have spent in the Arboretum. Thanks go to Vaughan Gallavan for all his work and the expertise that he provides on our trees and to Peter Watts for looking after our finances so well. We are grateful to Geoff Jackson and Vaughan Gallavan for improving and updating the Information Trail, Roger Wilkins has co-ordinated the project and acted as a first port of call and contact (and he wishes to thank Isobel Hepworth, our Chairman, for steering us through the year - and for thanking everyone else!).

**Enjoy the Arboretum!**

