

FRIENDS OF NEWTON ARBORETUM

Newsletter No. 5: Jan 2016



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INTRODUCTION

Here is our fifth 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.

As we have said before, 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 a little later this year, on Wednesday 18 May. See below for details.

COMMITTEE

Chairman: Andrew Gee (851164)
Vice Chairman: Geoff Jackson (851551)
Secretary: Roger Wilkins (851337)
Treasurer: Peter Watts (851369)
Head Warden: David Vallance (851266)
Committee: Vaughan Gallavan (851589); Brenda Lewsey Cocks (851300); Ron Nethercott (851372); Richard Whalley (851251); Kate Anstey (851190, representing Parish Council); John Quicke (851627, Owner)

The Committee thank Isobel Hepworth, who retired from the Chair in June, after having been a foundation member of the Committee and Chairman for three years. Isobel continues to be involved with the Arboretum as a Friend and Volunteer Warden. She was succeeded as Chairman by Andrew Gee, with Geoff Jackson becoming Vice Chairman. We welcome Brenda Lewsey Cocks and Richard Whalley as new Committee Members.

REPORT ON 2015

This has again been a busy and successful year for the Arboretum. The use of the Arboretum continues to increase. In response to an enquiry in the recent Parish Plan questionnaire, some 37% of respondents indicated that they visited the Arboretum frequently and 47% infrequently. These figures were higher than those for the use either of the Parish Hall or the Recreation Ground! This indicates what an appreciated and well-used local facility the Arboretum has become in the four years since it was opened to the public. In addition to the many individual visitors we have had visits from several groups from the area, including the Botany Group of the Devonshire Association, the Crediton Garden Club, Brampford Speke School, Exeter Probus and Crediton Children's Centre. The Arboretum was even the venue for a youngster's Dinosaur Party! A real highlight was the MidSummer Fest. This is described later.

We have continued to improve the Arboretum. In June a fine new bench was installed at the far end of the Arboretum as a memorial to Sid Tarry, who had lived in the village for many years and had worked in the Arboretum. We wish to thank the Tarry family for their generosity in making this gift. The Friends also received a bequest from the

late Tim Packer and this is enabling us to work out a wheelchair-friendly route in the upper part of the Arboretum. Hopefully this will be completed in 2016. Many thanks to Tim and his family.



The Tarry family christening the Memorial Bench. Most of the Friends Committee were involved in pulling the bench timbers from the Church carpark.



Two owl boxes, provided by John Carroll, were put up early in the year. Hopefully they will attract some owls this year! All of the trees that we planted in 2015 and this Spring (described in the last Newsletter) have done well, helped by the generally damp conditions. The yellow rattle sown by Vaughan Gallavan in some of our grassy areas is developing. This is parasitic on grasses. It will reduce grass vigour and give a greater chance for herbs and other wild flowers to develop with the grass. The bulbs that we planted in 2015 gave variable results, with the Fritillarias and some of the Camassias doing well, but the smaller Chionodoxa not being seen at all. More bulbs were planted this year (see later).



Vaughan explaining how large the flowers will grow to an incredulous Lynda Pearce at the AGM in April!

We are hoping to increase the colour and interest in the Arboretum in mid and late season. To contribute to this end the bramble area just inside the Arboretum has now been cleared and will be planted with a range of hydrangeas and one or two small trees.



A Polypodium fern thriving on a cherry. We will be introducing a number of other native and exotic ferns into the Arboretum. The new monkey puzzle, donated by Geoff Jackson, is doing well.

Our volunteers have done a tremendous job keeping on top of the maintenance of the Arboretum. With damp conditions there has been a tremendous amount of grass growth necessitating frequent mowing of the paths. The brambles have also tried to do well, but have been kept under control.

All of this work has been made possible by the volunteer effort, by subscriptions and the proceeds of fund-raising activities. Over £750 was raised from our staffing the Car Boot at Matford, a Bingo session kindly arranged by Joyce Rook, a very successful Coffee Morning in the Parish Hall and the MidSummer Fest. We thank the Friends and others who helped with and supported these events.

MIDSUMMER FEST

This event on 20 June was a great success. Helped by the sun shining and a balmy atmosphere, about 150 people enjoyed an evening's relaxation and entertainment. This was the biggest event that we have held in the Arboretum. Many of you will recall the games that were put on for the early evening (thanks to Dan and Heidi Howarth, Maureen Whiteley, Paul McCutcheon, Geoff Jackson and Brenda Lewsey Cocks), the picnic supper and then music by Alex Crouch and his group and by Bella a Capella.

In preparation for the event, David Vallance, with help from Trevor Whiteley, used wood from the Arboretum to fashion a hopscotch. This was used for the first time at the Fest and is now a permanent feature.

We thank the Church and the Hall for helping us put on the event. All three organizations are keen to put on a similar event in 2017 - we will miss 2016, because of the Revels being held near to mid-summer.



Picnic time at the Fest and the Hopscotch ready for use

BULB PLANTING

There was a good turnout of Friends to contribute to bulb planting on the morning of 17 October. We continued the policy of planting mainly 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 again planted different species of *Camassia*, which have blue or white flowers late in the Spring and both purple and white varieties of the delicate bell-shaped *Fritillarias*. This year we also planted a range of crocuses (in the area behind the notice board), some lily of the valley 'bulbs' (kindly donated by Beryl Peck) and daffodils (kindly donated by Richard Whalley) by Redwood Way. We will be interested in seeing how they grow and spread and expect to extend the bulb planting next year.

AGM 2016

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 18 May. 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.

One tour will be led by Helen Kearney. Helen is a herbalist and several of you may have heard her talk at Gardening Club meetings. She will point out plants in the Arboretum with medicinal properties and how they could be used.

The other tour will be led by Marion Kneebone. She is a Trustee of the Devon Gardens Trust and heavily involved with their Tree Group. With colleagues, she has twice visited the Arboretum to measure and assess some of our important trees to include them in a Register of significant trees maintained by the Trust. Marion will highlight these trees and outline why they are important for Devon.

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 more formal meeting, 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.

Mon 29 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.

Wed 27 April Visit to the gardens at Sherwood John and Gina Quicke have kindly agreed for the Friends to visit Sherwood. We will meet in the Parish Hall car park at 6.00 pm to minimize the number of cars having to park at Sherwood. Vaughan will lead a conducted tour. Numbers may have to be limited. **Please let Roger Wilkins know if you are wishing to come.** There will not be a charge, but small donations for Arboretum funds would be appreciated.

Sun 3 July Newton Village Revels We will put on a small exhibit about the Arboretum

Sat 1 Oct Coffee Morning in the Parish Hall

We have applied to look after the Car Boot sale at Matford again, but have not yet heard whether we have been allocated a day. We'll be asking for early morning helpers if our application has been successful.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The number of Friends continues to increase and we now have 65 subscribers. 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. Vaughan Gallavan is thanked for his work and the crucial expertise that he provides on our trees and Peter Watts for looking after our finances so well. Roger Wilkins has continued to co-ordinate the project and the work has been steered and kept on the rails in 2015 by our two Chairmen, Isobel Hepworth for the first half of the year and then Andrew Gee. Photographs were provided by Isobel Hepworth, Geoff Jackson and Richard Whalley.

Enjoy the Arboretum!

