

Issue No. 41

September 2015

Friends of Thwaite Gardens Newsletter



Friends of Thwaite Gardens

AGM 6th October 2015

AGENDA

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 To approve the minutes of the AGM 2014
- 4 Matters Arising
- 5 Chairman's Annual Report
- 6 Secretary's Annual Report
- 7 Treasurer's Annual Report
- 8 Election of Chairman
- 9 Election of Committee Members
- 10 Any Other Business

N.B. If anyone wishes to nominate anyone, or stand themselves, for any position on the Committee, please notify the Secretary before the AGM

FRIENDS OF THWAITE GARDENS
SECRETARY'S REPORT 2015

Hello everyone,

Our programme this year gave us one of the most exceptionally entertaining presentations.

It was held on March 24th when Bob Brown the owner of Cotswold Garden Flowers did a wonderful rendition on the title "Too many plants not enough space" Bob discussed the benefits of using plants of longevity, he referred to getting your money's worth by buying your favourite plants that last a long time. Bob is a very knowledgeable gentleman and a humorist too. The audience were in raptures. It was excellent.

There was also a splendid display of interesting plants that Bob had brought for us all to be tempted to buy. Which we did!

Our annual Open Day which took place on Sunday 17th May, was a great success. My thanks go to everyone who helped on the day.

Open Evening on June 24th was slightly better than previous times. Several people who had not been before to the gardens went along on the guided tour and on their return were singing the praises of John Killingbeck's tour and of his knowledge. So please come along to our next tour if you missed it.

New this year is our Autumnal Tour of the gardens.

This takes place on Saturday 24th October when a guided tour will take place. The charge will be £1 only (including members) and is free for children under 16 yrs.

John Killingbeck who is our very knowledgeable tree and plant expert will be leading the tour. It will commence at 11.00am and continue until around 13.00pm. You are of course at liberty to leave the tour at any point should you wish to do so.

It is our AGM on 6th of October 2015 and Professor Roland Ennos has kindly offered to do a presentation for the Friends and it is titled 'Trees and us'. Don't miss it! At the Methodist Church on Hallgate, Cottingham starts at 7.30pm.

So here we are nearing the end of the year. The Friday volunteers are endlessly toiling away to maintain and develop projects. I cannot thank them enough for their hard work and dedication in turning the area that we work in to be a beautiful wide ranging display of speciality greenhouses and outside borders, plus the wonderful herb garden.

Any donations or sponsorship is very welcomed as all the money goes back into the gardens.

Thank you all for your support in helping us to make it an even more special place.

Enjoy the gardens.

Pam Bailey

~~~~~

### *Diary DATES*

AGM 6<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30pm at Cottingham Methodist Church followed by talk by Prof. Roland Ennos

Autumn tour of gardens – 24<sup>th</sup> October 11am to 13.00 approx

## **Treasurer's Report: Friends of Thwaite Gardens**

### **1.8.14-31.7.15**

The income and expenses of the past financial year can be seen in the balance sheet. We have spent considerably more this year than we received, but the money was there to be spent on the gardens and that is its purpose.

Those of you who have visited the gardens over the past year will, I hope, have noticed that we have expanded a number of the beds and planted a range of new and different plants. Under the guidance of our chairman, John Killingbeck, the Friday volunteers have developed a "Garden Plan" so that future purchases of plants fit within this overall framework and resources can be focused accordingly. We hope to buy a cork oak tree in the foreseeable future and to expand the Mediterranean beds, probably joining up the two large beds beyond the Alpine House.

The Alpine House itself has been finished and we are grateful to Pat Foreman for the work she has put in and for finding the range of alpine plants and tending to them. This venture has been part of the extra cost shown in the accounts. We are all very pleased with the results and hope you agree.

We have developed our connections with local nurseries, supporting our local traders. We are given trade discount by Bob at Southwood Farmshop on The Parkway (from where we purchase most of our compost and bark), at Coletta's in Dunswell and (new this year) O'Brien's, which is in Nursery Walk, off Golf Links Road. We have also had the occasional ton of bark from Brian at Hallgate Landscapes. Both Bob and Brian deliver our materials free of charge, as their way of supporting us.

The less good news is that some of our plants have been stolen (sometimes very soon after being planted and being quite expensive plants or shrubs) and others have been damaged by marauding humans or dogs. We trust the thieves are not Friends. We presume the humans are young people, unaware

of the significance of their behaviour. We continue to plead that dogs be kept on leads.

We hope the university will fence off the back of the botanic gardens, near the stream, as soon as their finances allow, and hope this will reduce damage in future.

Essentially, however, the gardens continue to be a source of pleasure, we are financially afloat and are trying to manage our finances in such a way as to maximize efficiency while introducing new and interesting specimens in a planned and cohesive way.

As treasurer I would like to thank the Friday volunteers for their concerted efforts and the pleasure they bring to being a member of this group.

Annie Bourton Card  
Treasurer  
26.8.15

~~~~~

Income/Expenditure

FRIENDS OF THWAITE GARDENS

YEAR: 1.8.2014-31.7.2015

INCOME

Membership fees	£1,823.00
Donations	£39.00
Open Day & Open Evening	£2,579.98
Sundries/ miscellaneous	£42.50
Entrance fees (except Open Day)	£90.00
<u>TOTAL INCOME:</u>	<u>£4,574.48</u>

EXPENDITURE

Hall / room hire	£115.00
Speakers	£255.00
Plants, gardening materials:	£4,551.93
Sundries	£1,688.52
Refreshments (evening meetings and meals for speakers):	£56.79
Printing :	£330.20
Donations/gifts for services:	£5.00

<u>TOTAL OUTGOINGS</u>	<u>£7,002.44</u>
-------------------------------	-------------------------

<u>EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE:</u>	(-£2,427.96)
--	---------------------

<u>BANK & CASH at 31.7.14:</u>	£5,845.92
---	------------------

<u>BANK (no cash) at 31.7.15:</u>	<u>£3,722.90</u>
--	-------------------------

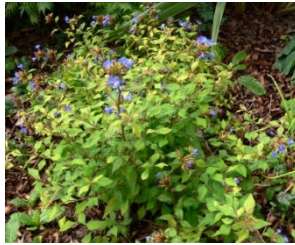
Annie Bourton Card	17.8.15
Treasurer	

Many thanks to Mr Martyn Bishop, BA Hons, Business Studies, PGCE, for examining the accounts.

~~~~~

*We welcome any contributions from members, of articles, photographs, letters etc. to future copies of the Newsletter, so if you would like something including, please contact the Editor, whose details are at the end of this Newsletter*

## PLANT OF THE MONTH – HARDY PLUMBAGO (*Ceratostigma willmottianum*)



To be found in the front garden, this plant is a ‘must have’ for lovers of blue flowers! The English name of this plant refers to its similarity to the true Plumbago (*Plumbago auriculata*) which is a large scrambling shrub, usually trained as a wall plant in Mediterranean countries or under glass in the UK. It is noted for its long blooming very pale china blue flowers. The flowers of *Ceratostigma* are nearly identical to true Plumbago, as the two plants are closely related, except that they are of the most intense, almost gentian blue colour, in many ways rather more striking. But the plant itself is much smaller, more of a dwarf shrub rather less than 1m in height, which can be accommodated in the smallest garden.

For prolonged floral display *Ceratostigma* has few rivals and can last from mid- summer to late autumn. The plant is basically very hardy but definitely does best in a warm sunny position. This is because blooming will begin much earlier and go on later than if grown in a cooler spot. The ideal situation might be at the base of a south facing wall. Not only will flowering be better, but the plant is happiest in dry soil, indeed will endure drought without any recourse to watering.

*Ceratostigma* is best grown in the manner of some Fuchsias, cut down to base in early spring like an herbaceous plant. A bad winter will kill back the top growth anyway but even if this survives it tends to look rather scrawny into the second year. However because autumn colour can be a good mix of rosy yellow tints and the tufted winter seed heads are also rather attractive, the cutting is best left until early the following year. Thus, in all, the plant can be said to be of some aesthetic value for around 8 months of the year.



*Ceratostigma* is one of the very top 'butterfly flowers' and may be attended by several individuals of several butterfly species at any one time. It is also a favourite of that charismatic and utterly enthralling species, the Hummingbird Hawkmoth, which if it happens to be in your area, is almost guaranteed to visit.

There are several other species of *Ceratostigma* available in the trade but on the whole these are less satisfactory than *C. willmottianum*. *C. plumbaginoides* is widely available and has similar vivid, though slightly later, blue flowers with a richer red autumn colour which make a striking combination. It is a sprawling suckering herbaceous plant rather than a shrub which can even be a little invasive in ideal conditions, though makes a good ground cover. Less often seen is *C. griffithii* which makes a more determined if rather more tangled shrub than *C. willmottianum*. It has small deep blue flowers, though which tend to be rather late unless it is grown in a warm position. It also has good autumn colour. Other species exist but are much rarer.

J. Killingbeck, August 2015

~~~~~

Stuck for a present?

If you would like to give a membership of Friends of Thwaite Gardens as a birthday or Christmas present, just fill in the normal application form with the details of your recipient/s. Then write on it that this will be a present and ask me to send the cards to you at your address. Enclose a cheque for the appropriate amount. The membership cards will come in a nice envelope along with a floral card welcoming your recipient, all inside another envelope addressed to you.

This would be a present which lasts all year.

Annie Bourton Card

TREES OF THWAITE - SYCAMORE (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)



Just to be contrary, and in deliberate contrast to most of my other tree articles, this time we will look at perhaps the most ubiquitous and certainly most despised tree in the British Isles – the common Sycamore.

It comes as a surprise to most people that the Sycamore is not native to Britain but is thought to have been introduced in the 16th C., or earlier, from the Continent. But it is so well suited that it has become part of our landscape, even being dominant in some areas of the country. A second surprise perhaps, is that unlike many ‘tree lovers’ I have considerable admiration for the Sycamore. A good Sycamore can rival an oak in grandeur.

A constant refrain of many of past tree articles has been how, mostly because of our often grey chilly summer climate, few of the species described grow to anywhere near their full potential in our area. In the Sycamore we have at last a tree of which it might be said East Yorkshire has specimens as good as any. The largest Sycamore in Yorkshire (which has many big ones) is said to be the one outside the old Beverley law courts, along New Walk. The Sycamore loves cool summers and some parts of Southern Europe seems almost impossible to grow. It is virtually the only tree that will make a fine shapely specimen in the high Pennines – so much so that it is close to iconic of bleak Pennine farmsteads and as such, I believe, the only non –native tree approved for landscape planting by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. The very largest are in Southern Scotland reaching 35m+ in height. In our own region, Birdsall estate in particular, near Malton has many superb

specimens but good ones may be encountered anywhere. Because its wood is good and useful, Sycamore is frequently grown in timber plantations, especially on the Wolds.

A good Sycamore is a very impressive tree at any season except perhaps autumn, because its fall colour, though sometimes yellow is often a blotchy mix of greenish brown – deeply depressing on a wet autumn day. Other seasons are kinder. Spring leaves are lush, vibrantly green or copper and often early, followed by a cascade of pendant green flowers, rich in nectar and humming with bees. Summer defines the crown shape as a remarkably neat and distinctively lobed form – almost as if clipped deliberately to resemble a cloud. Winter emphasises the bark. Whilst an uninteresting grey in young trees it becomes flaky with age often revealing a subtle almost reticulated pattern beneath, though this varies from tree to tree.

Unfortunately, because of its exuberance in our climate, there are too many very mediocre Sycamores. It seeds notoriously and is widely cursed by gardeners. Not only does it grow fast but is greedy of moisture and the dark crown drips honeydew from countless aphids onto whatever lingers below, the sugar turning dirty black with sooty mould fungus for much of the year. It is not a good garden tree. At Thwaite, in common with many gardens, we have too many Sycamores, only a few of which are worth retaining as shelter, the remainder taking valuable space and would be better removed. It is often persecuted in nature reserves as an invasive alien. Fair enough, but in terms of biomass the aphids it harbours form a better food source for such as birds, hoverflies and ladybirds than many native trees. It flourishes in similar habitats to native Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).

The name “Sycamore” is a very old one and derives from a reference in the Bible, which is thought to refer to *Ficus sycamorus* – the “Sycamore Fig”. But the link with *Acer pseudoplatanus* is not obvious. The Latin *pseudoplatanus* means “false plane” alluding to the similarity of leaf shape of the two trees. In Scotland, where true planes do not grow too well, it is apparently (though I have never heard it) sometimes referred to as the “Plane Tree”. Alternatively, its other name, “Great Maple” reminds us that it is a member of that fine and otherwise often rather refined group of trees – *Acer*, Sycamore ‘helicopter’ seeds being classic of the genus.

There are several ornamental forms of Sycamore. Noblest and commonest is perhaps the variegated Sycamore (*A. p.* 'Variegata'). Growing almost as vigorously as the wild form its pale green crown was a distinctive landmark at the junction of Priory road, Cottingham, where a short row of fine specimens once grew. Only one still remains intact. The purple Sycamore (*A. p.* 'Purpurea') has an unusual kaki green crown with purple undersides when ruffled by the wind. 'Worleei' is bright acid yellow for much of the summer – a strong golden tree. 'Brilliantissimum' is popular in small gardens. A striking pink mushroom in spring, becoming sickly green in summer, it is grafted and very slow growing. 'Erythrocarpum' – identical to normal sycamore except the unripe seeds are scarlet.

John Killingbeck

August 2015

~~~~~

---

*Thank you to all those members of Friends who supported the recent Red Cross Open Garden, by attending or helping. As always your support is much appreciated. Thanks particularly to "Annie the scone lady" for being there all day, cheerfully jamming and creaming scones for our appreciative visitors, and of course to Marilyn for making many of them.*

---

## **Millennium Orchard and Wood, near Beverley.**

Do you all know about this lovely orchard and wood? I didn't, despite priding myself on going to as much local stuff as I can.

It is set in a nature reserve more than twice the size of Thwaite gardens and was developed at the millennium by the local WI (East Yorkshire Federation of Women's Institutes), in partnership with the East Riding of Yorkshire Council, who still manage it. It is one of the largest non-commercial orchards in England, specializing in northern varieties of apples and pears, of which it has over 100.

There is the orchard, a wood, pathways through and round this, picnic tables, bee hives and information plaques.

There is an information leaflet available at the entrance. This can also be downloaded from the East Riding of Yorkshire website.

Access is now more limited than described in this leaflet as Shepherd's Lane has been cut in half by the new road. It can only be reached from Long Lane. The Hull end starts at Thearne (pass through Dunswell, pass the two big garden centres and take the next left). Follow Long Lane to the railway line, then after the crossing turn left. Drive along this small and bendy road until you come to Old Hall Farm (second left). There is a small parking area there. When this is full, park on the grass nearby. To get to the rest of the nature reserve, which is roughly twice the size of the orchard and wood area, walk or drive back to the first turning on the left which you passed earlier. The Beverley end of Long Lane starts near the Minster, turn right before the railway crossing.

This is Beverley Parks, which dates back to the Domesday Book.

Annie Bourton Card

### **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER**

***Annual subscriptions are due on 1st November 2015  
They are £8 per person or £12 for two people living at the  
same address***

***Anyone who has not paid by the Open Day 2016 will be  
removed from the database.***

***Cheques should be made payable to "The Friends of  
Thwaite Gardens" and sent to the treasurer, whose  
contact details are on the last page of this Newsletter.***

Please note: new members who have joined on, or  
after, the Open Day in May 2015 do not have to renew  
their subscriptions until November 2016.

~~~~~

Bat Update!

On a recent inspection of the bat boxes at the Gardens, the Brown Long-Eared Bat, which had first been seen in 2009, and was spotted again in a bat box in 2011 was seen to be still in residence!



Contact Details

Chairman

John Killingbeck
7 Ash Grove
Market Weighton
YO4 33DY

01430 872312

Johnkillingbeck7878@btinternet.com

Secretary

Pamela Bailey
39 Priory Road
Cottingham
HU16 4RR

01482 843304

pambee123@gmail.com

Treasurer

Annie Bourton-Card
595 Endyke Lane
Hull
HU6 8TE

01482 849158

card33690@hotmail.co.uk

Newsletter Editor

Sue Swetez
141 Mill Rise
Skidby
Cottingham
HU16 5UA

01482 846487

s.swetez@hull.ac.uk

Friends' website:- www.hull.ac.uk/thwaite-gardens

