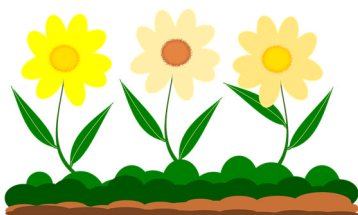


Issue No. 47

September 2017

# **Friends of Thwaite Gardens Newsletter**



## Open Day 2017, Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May

Our annual Open Day was once again a great success. We were lucky with the weather, which stayed dry although it was cloudy. All the Friday volunteers had worked hard to make it the success it was, growing plants over many months, organizing the tombola and giving their time on the day. Other volunteers from the Friends came forward to help with the rota: many willing hands made a big difference. Delicious cakes and scones were donated. John Killingbeck provided two tree walks, which were much appreciated by those who participated. Thank you one and all.

Our Open Day is a big fund-raiser and also an opportunity for people to join or to renew their memberships.

This is what we made:

Plant stall.....£480.50 (plus another £11.50 at the next weekend Tree Walk)

Tombola.....£150.30

Gate..... £587.20

Refreshments... £290.00

Donation from Cactus Society (10% of their sales): £12.00

This gave us a grand total of £1,531.50. (My figures in the annual report show a slightly higher figure from which some expenses were subsequently deducted).

We also took £539 in membership fees: new members and renewals.

Annie Bourton Card

**Income / Expenditure**  
**FRIENDS OF THWAITE GARDENS**  
**YEAR: 1st Aug 2016 to 31st July 2017**

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>£</b>
Membership Fees	2,714.00
Donations	25.00
Open Day	1,551.30
Sundries/Miscellaneous	103.95
Entrance Fees (except Open Day)	125.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>4,519.25</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>	
Hall / Room Hire	57.20
Speakers	215.10
Plants & Gardening Materials	3,514.76
Sundries	221.41
Refreshments (evening meetings & meals for speakers)	47.20
Printing	72,50
Donations & Gifts for Services	-----
<b>TOTAL OUTGOINGS</b>	<b>4,128.17</b>

£

<b>EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>391.08</b>
<b>BANK (no cash) AT 31st July 2016</b>	<b>4,523.40</b>
<b>BANK (no CASH) at 31st July 2017:</b>	<b>4,914.48</b>

Signed: Annie Bourton Card

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## **Friends of Thwaite Gardens, Treasurer's Report: 2016-17**

It can be seen from the Income/Expenditure figures that we remain in a financially healthy position. My thanks to our many members, without whom this would not be possible. Our membership fees are our main source of income, almost double our takings on Open Day, our other main source of income. This year John Killingbeck has provided a number of tree walks, either on a Saturday or on an evening. We charge a flat £1 fee for this, which has swelled our coffers by over £100.

You will also see that our money is put to good use through the year: we spend almost everything we get. Most, indeed almost all, of the expenditure is on plants and gardening materials: trees, shrubs, small plants, large plants, outdoor plants, greenhouse plants, compost, bark, etc. We have been complimented on the cactus house being one of the best (thanks, John Killingbeck.). Pat Foreman continues to develop the alpine house and the displays in the outside alpine beds. Jean M and Kath work assiduously in the herb garden, with Jean organizing us all when it comes to pruning the rose arch. Steve Howe has developed the end greenhouse, notably with a lovely display of carnivorous plants. John K concentrates on the middle greenhouses and he and Steve are in the process of redeveloping the economic/ edible plants house (the first greenhouse you

come to) after we lost a number of plants in the winter when the heating failed in that greenhouse. Our other volunteers: Olive, Barbara, Sharon, Jean H, Jackie, Lynda, Lyn put in hours on the open beds or in the planting greenhouse at the rear. Most have specific responsibility for a particular part of the gardens. Rohan, despite his plant expertise, is our man for fixing broken wheelbarrows, establishing flourishing compost heaps and wielding a drill wherever necessary. Bill, now over 80, works with dedication, clearing paths and tidying round the greenhouses: no easy task. Graham and Anne are happy to set to weeding, a vital task.

Thanks to Lynn for doing whatever is required in terms of publicity.

Most weeks there are at least a dozen volunteers, often 14 or 15, working for two to three hours. This adds up to more than the equivalent of a full time gardener and has enabled us to continue to develop the gardens.

We do, however, continue to be troubled by vandalism – smashed windows, damaged young trees. It is such a shame.

The construction of the new classroom has been good for students and schoolchildren alike. It is nice to see local schoolchildren enjoying our lovely space and schools making use of what is effectively a community resource. Certainly on Open Day, the classroom made a much nicer refreshment area and enabled some people to drink their tea and eat their cake inside, although most people used the outside tables.

By the time this is published the gardens will also have been opened for three days as part of the Hull City of Culture (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> August). I am hopeful that more people will join the Friends on that day.

I must thank Mr Martyn Bishop, BA, Hons. (Business Studies) for examining the accounts and for helping me at other times with the spreadsheet on the computer when my technical skills fail me.

I hope you, the members, can continue to come and enjoy our lovely space. We appreciate your support. Together we make up the Friends of Thwaite Gardens.

Annie Bourton Card, Treasurer, 3.8.17

# Secretary's Report

No one has volunteered to become our secretary since Pam retired over a year ago. The role has been shared by some of the committee members. My particular thanks go to Rohan Lewis for producing the minutes of our committee meetings, not least because the task would otherwise fall to me! Rohan produces neat, concise and accurate minutes very quickly, which helps us all.

Annie Bourton Card

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## FRIEND OF THWAITE GARDENS MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016

Held in the Methodist Hall, Hallgate,  
Cottingham, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at 7.30pm

### Welcome and apologies for absence

The chairman, John Killingbeck, welcomed the members and guests present. Apologies had been received from John & Marjorie Warburton, Barbara Russell and Jean Major.

### **1 Minutes of 2015 AGM**

Approved

### **2 Matters arising**

It was noted that the Secretary's post remains vacant (discussed further below).

**3 Chairman's annual report** *(the full report is published in newsletter no.44, August 2016)*

John Killingbeck reported that attendances at the Spring Open Day and subsequent Garden Walks had been excellent. New developments in the Gardens include, in the greenhouses, the development of a collection of insectivorous plants, and another of tropical economic plants. Construction of a new classroom adjacent to the greenhouses has begun (see later). He is planning to develop closer links to the Yorkshire Arboretum at Castle Howard. Dog-walking by members of the public has reduced since access via Thwaite Hall has been restricted, however vandalism by youths has been a serious problem over the summer.

John concluded by thanking all those who had helped in the garden during the year, whether as Friday volunteers or at other events.

#### **4 Secretary's annual report** *(the full report is published in newsletter no.44, August 2016)*

The Treasurer reported that since Pam Bailey's resignation as secretary, secretarial duties have been divided up among other committee members.

No-one has so far volunteered to replace her.

Annie Bourton Card went on to pay tribute to Pam, who had been secretary for 15 years. John Killingbeck added that Pam and he had been the first two of the "Friday volunteers", so she was a founder (and continuing) member of a group which now numbers 16 people.

A proposal was made from the floor that a formal vote of thanks be made to Pam Bailey for her work, and this was unanimously approved.

#### **5 Treasurer's annual report** *(the full report, together with Income and Expenditure accounts for 2015-16, is published in newsletter no. 44, August 2016)*

Annie reported that membership now stands at 450, and the finances are in a healthy position. Membership fees comprised roughly half the income of £5772 which the Garden received, the other half coming from Open Days and Evenings. Expenditure for the year was £4971 – three-quarters of this was on plants and gardening materials, overseen by John Killingbeck and Steve Howe.

## 6 Election of Officers

The following were elected unopposed:

John Killingbeck (Chairman), Annie Bourton Card (Treasurer), Victor Swetez, Steve Howe, Jean Major, Rohan Lewis, Sharon Western.

## 7 Other Business

1. Royal Horticultural Society \_The RHS have written to John Killingbeck to say that Thwaite Gardens will be covered in a forthcoming magazine article.
2. Gardeners' Question Time Prof. Ennos reported that the BBC Radio 4 programme would be recorded from the Middleton Hall, Hull University on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Tickets will be available soon – there is likely to be a small charge to cover refreshments.
3. City of Culture 2017 Vic Swetez reported that the University are seeking ideas for events to be held in Thwaite Gardens from April 2017 onwards. Suggestions should be made to him, for forwarding to the University.
4. Ferns Yvonne Golding, who is secretary of the British Pteridological Society, reported that the Society would be visiting Hull on Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017, and FoTG members would be welcome to attend. Further details to follow.
5. New Classroom Prof Ennos gave a short illustrated presentation on the new 70-square-metre environmental classroom which is under construction by the University next to the greenhouses in Thwaite Gardens. The building will be available for:
  - Biology and Geography research students, and students of Outdoor Education.
  - School visits
  - Lectures and other events, including FoTG Open Days .The building will be single-storey timber-clad, with a “green” wildflower roof. It has cloakroom and toilet facilities.

The meeting closed just after 8pm

Rohan Lewis 7<sup>th</sup> October 2016



# **Friends of Thwaite Gardens**

**AGM Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017, 7.30pm**

**(Methodist Hall, Hallgate, Cottingham)**

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 To approve the minutes of the AGM 2016
- 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

**NB If anyone wishes to nominate anyone or stand themselves, for any position on the Committee, please let me know. Vic**

**[v.swetez@hull.ac.uk](mailto:v.swetez@hull.ac.uk), mobile 07745561397, home 01482 846487**

## PLANT OF THE MONTH : CROCOSMIA



Originally only familiar to most people in its most basic type – and called “Montbretia” – *Crocoscemia* in its many forms has become almost a ‘must have’ in any garden and a stalwart of later summer flowering borders. But the plants we enjoy today are a complex mix of hybrids originating mostly in Southern Africa, mainly at altitude.

Montbretia (*Crocoscemia* x *crocoscemiflora*) is itself a hybrid, said to have originated in France in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has proved eminently suited to the British climate and in most gardens has to be watched for its invasive qualities. Even though the cheery orange flowers are evident everywhere, they still carry a faint suggestion of something exotic – a touch too garish to be a European native. They require almost no maintenance. Even if the shaggy heaps of dead foliage are never cleared away, the plant simply pushes its way through the mat anew each season.

Foreign visitors to western Britain could be forgiven for thinking Montbretia is a wild native however because it grows in profusion in almost every hedgerow in the West Country, Wales and Argyll as well as Ireland, sometimes mingled with the equally alien and also partly naturalised scarlet Fuchsia. The two combine to light up many a dark drizzly mile of road in such regions. The plant’s vigour is more muted in drier less mild regions such as East Yorkshire but even here it is not that unusual to encounter wild colonies that have survived

eviction from someone's garden. On the cliffs around Flambrough it is well established and spreading.

Relatively few of the true wild species are grown but *C. masonorum* and *C. paniculata* are seen fairly frequently. Both are decidedly classier than common Montbretia and would seem sufficient to dazzle any observer. Nevertheless an entire suite, nay veritable galaxy of refined hybrids has also been and continues to be produced for gardens.

Yes, *Crocasmia* is one of those plants that has been subject to 'collector's mania' and the array of named forms seems to teeter on the ludicrous, with close to 200 listed in 'Plantfinder'. For plants to have improved garden varieties is no problem in itself. But when as with *Crocasmia*, most generally resemble de lux versions that are not, if we are honest, entirely dissimilar to Montbretia, we begin to question what is going on.

There are admittedly a few outstanding and excellent varieties among the many - of which one might name 'Star of the East' (large flowers) 'Emily MacKenzie' (beautifully marked), 'Solfatare' (subtle apricot with bronze foliage) and of course 'Lucifer' (sheer irrepressible panache). But a great many of the others seem to differ little except in the variation of orange/red/yellow, fairly minor differences in height, or time in late summer/autumn when they bloom. Lovely though they are, I suspect many of these varieties will be forgotten except by compulsive collectors. One is reminded of a piano in which more and more unnecessary keys are being added. Any garden could be well and magnificently furnished using a fraction of the varieties available years ago.

Whichever varieties one chooses, *Crocasmia* are easy to grow in any reasonably fertile moisture retentive soil in sun or part shade. The stronger varieties may not need to be staked and all are easy to propagate by division. Some varieties are considered slightly tender, but this is rarely a problem.

## TREES OF THWAITE JAPANESE HONEY LOCUST (*Gleditsia japonica*)



Thwaite is full of surprises. This particular tree has perplexed me for years. I have always known more or less what it was – that is a honey locust – but have always nursed the suspicion that it was other than the commonest type – namely the North American Honey Locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*). We have an example of *G. triacanthos* to the rear of Green Wickets and once even had a trio of the golden form – G.t. ‘Sunburst’, before flooding killed all but one of the three which still lingers to the rear of Thwaite hall.

The Japanese tree, which grows close to the east of the hall, has a distinctive, not to say striking umbrella like habit, naturally weeping downward at the extremities. This is unlike *G. triacanthos* which is far more vertical in structure. But one never knows with trees – sometimes an individual plant can manifest some abnormality which the unwary can take to mean it is something quite different. I have a general policy to myself of ‘assume something is common unless you have good reason to believe otherwise’. Thus I so assumed with this particular tree.

The first intimation that our *Gleditsia* might definitely be something out of the ordinary came some years ago, when a nationally well known arborist visited the gardens – incognito – but was good enough to post a list of his findings to the university. I eventually came by this list, on which he listed our tree as *G. sinensis* – the Chinese Honey Locust, itself quite a rarity. But he admitted the

identification was doubtful and there were also one or two other anomalies on the list. So I did not consider this good enough evidence to be sure.

Following our recent special open day in conjunction with the Yorkshire Arboretum earlier this summer, I passed on a specimen of the tree to the curator John Grimshaw, who later identified it as Japanese Honey Locust. This ID now stands as 'official'. By strange coincidence I recently viewed another, though rather smaller specimen, in a private arboretum near York. This too had the characteristic umbrella like habit. But identifying obscure trees is not as easy as it might seem. Finding good authoritative sources is the first problem, since many collectors have only one specimen which may itself be in some way abnormal or perhaps a hybrid, donated and identified on trust by a collector somewhere else. Some differences are very subtle requiring access to definitive references.

All this aside, Honey Locusts are very distinctive and characterful trees. The leaves are of particularly attractive compound pinnate feathery structure casting a light shade. This together with their lateness into leaf makes the common form and its varieties quite useful in smaller gardens. Flowers are formed in pendulous green racemes but are not eye catching. Autumn colour is a delicate gold. Most extraordinary of all perhaps are the ferocious spines which adorn the main trunk and branches. These resemble small antlers a few cm. in size and are usually borne in scattered clusters on the bark, which is otherwise dark of a slightly warty texture.

But the feature which gives the trees the strange name "honey locust" is not often seen on those grown in the north of the UK. Like so many hardwoods, *Gleditsia* is happier in a climate with hot sunny summer conditions. Sometimes in the south of England and even more so on the Continent the enormous seed pods are freely produced. Green and inconspicuous at first, these ripen to near black and look for all the world like dried bananas hanging in the branches. They are quite striking in winter and even rattle in the wind as they dehydrate. "Locust" is the name given to certain tree pods, described originally in the Bible, probably referring to the Carob fruit (*Ceratonia siliqua*). The name was transferred to many pod bearing trees by righteous American settlers anxious

to find evidence of God's favour in the wilderness. Honey locust was so named because the pods contain a sweet pulp in which the seeds are embedded.

Not a treat enjoyed at Thwaite though. Our *G. triacanthos* has occasionally produced a few pods, and might do so more regularly if it were not in so shaded a location. Even so, they usually involve careful spotting to find. A private garden tree overhanging Thwaite street also produces the odd pod. But to my knowledge, our Japanese tree has never produced anything.

Apart from liking hot summers, *Gleditsia* are very hardy, widely planted in the American mid west and in places like Hungary in Europe, tolerating drought as well as heat. Two ornamental forms of *triacanthos* are widely offered in garden centres here; the yellow 'Sunburst' and copper 'Ruby lace'. The former grows particularly well. 'Inermis' is a thornless form available to those who fear accidental injury by spines on the normal tree.

John Killingbeck,

August 2017

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*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*

## Hull City of Culture Open Days

When planning this event, on behalf of the University, I was not sure how things would work out, as we have never done a 3-day event before. However, thankfully, the weather behaved and the event was a great success.

Over the 3 days, I spoke to many people, and it was good to hear that some had come from as far away as Reading, Birmingham and Manchester to visit Hull and also the Gardens.

We had lots of good feedback over the 3 days and the Friends benefited with more new members signing up.

I would like to thank everyone who helped over the 3 days, not least of which, the dedicated Friends Friday volunteers, who have created and maintained attractive flower beds, borders and glasshouse displays and some of whom helped on Saturday and Sunday too. Many thanks.

Vic Swetez

School of Environmental Sciences

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### ***MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER***

***Annual subscriptions are due on 1st November 2017.***

***They are £8 per person or £12 for two people living at the same address***

***Anyone who has not -paid by the Open Day 2018 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 2017 do not have to renew their subscriptions until November 2018.***

## Diary Dates

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October**, 7.30pm at Cottingham Methodist Hall,  
Hallgate, Cottingham.

**AGM**, followed by talk “Special Plants for Small Spaces”

Given by Peter Williams , (who has specialist knowledge of  
plant ecology, physiology and soil microbiology)

Members free, non-members £2

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**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 11am**

**Autumn Walk**, led by John Killingbeck at Thwaite Gardens,  
Thwaite Street, Cottingham. Gates to close by 1.30pm

Admission £1,    Accompanied under 16s free

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*Gardens Opening Times Reminder*

*Monday to Thursday 10am to 3.30pm*

*Fridays 10am to 3pm, except on Bank Holidays and at other times  
when the University is closed.*



## **Contact Details**

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Vacancy

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