

Issue No. 38

August 2014

Friends of Thwaite Gardens Newsletter



Open Day 2014

A SUCCESSFUL OPEN DAY

Open Day, on 18 May 2014, was most successful. The weather was nice, the gardens looked good, the refreshments, mostly tea and homemade cake, were excellent. The combined efforts of all involved brought in significant resources:-

Gate:	£648.00
New members:	£800.00
Plant stall:	£625.50
Refreshments:	£363.70
Tombola:	£114.50
Edible Plants:	£61.90
Books:	£4.00

Total: £2,617.60

Many thanks to all the Friends of Thwaite volunteers who contributed, including the Red Cross ladies upon whose help we relied for the refreshments.

Thanks also to all of you who came along to support our Open Day and to enjoy our lovely gardens.

Annie Bourton Card

Diary Dates

7th October – AGM

Followed by a talk by Dr Y Golding, General Secretary,
British Pteridological Society, entitled
“The Private Lives of Ferns”

~~~~~

---

*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 them.*

---

## **Secretary's Report 10.08.2014**

As I write this year's report we are awaiting the possibility of being hit by the approaching Hurricane Bertha. Fingers crossed there will be little damage.

The extreme weather, flash flooding and long hot spells are perhaps going to be the norm 'under the umbrella of global warming' It has certainly increased the growth rate of many plants this year. However there is cause for concern over some of the older trees which are showing signs of wilting and die back. It could also just be old age.

Our presentations this year have included a talk by Bob and Catch's Garden Plants who were very successful for many years in their displays at the RHS garden shows. Their interesting talk 'Behind the scenes at the Shows' showed how much hard work and a sense of humour is needed to be successful.

Also a talk by Rob Potterton of Potterton Nurseries was of particular interest with information on alpine bulbs and plants with many for sale on the evening. Based in Nettleton Lincs the family based nursery has a wonderful display of plants for sale.

At our AGM on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014 we are very lucky to have a presentation by Dr Y. Golding who has received a gold award this year at the Tatton Park show. The presentation will be 'The Private Lives of Ferns' Not to be missed!

Once again I would like to say thank you to all of our volunteers that give their time weekly in working to improve the gardens.

Our Friends group of volunteers is quite unique to that of other Friends groups who work only as directed by the gardeners. Although we have to ask for permission to develop certain projects or work on different areas our work objective varies on what our priorities demand or on a totally new project. We are totally self-funded by membership fees, open days and donations which all go into the purchasing of tools, plants and sundries.

Let us have a big thank you for all of our volunteers who work weekly or on our special open days. None of this would happen without them.

Better go now it looks like Bertha is flooding my garden!

Enjoy the gardens!

Pam Bailey Secretary Friends of Thwaite Gardens

~~~~~

Friends of Thwaite Gardens

Treasurer's Report for year ending 31.7.14

Once again, at our year end, our bank balance is just under £6,000.00. It can be seen from the balance sheet that almost £5,000.00 passed through our account in the course of the last year, both in and out. We are reliant on our membership fees to provide for this and we currently have around 500 paid up members.

Expenditure on the garden itself has increased, both through purchases of plants and through purchases of garden materials, notably bark and compost. Most Fridays there are between 10 and 15 volunteers working for at least two hours, so it has been possible to extend the planting as well as managing the existing beds. The improvement and extension to the gardens is obvious and a source of much pleasure.

Our Open Day brought in more funds, through the plant stall, refreshments, etc, and there was a surge in new members. Financially it was even more successful than last year and many people have commented on how much they enjoyed the day. Our plants were very competitively priced, which is a perk of membership.

All the officers of the Friends are also Friday volunteers which has enabled regular discussions and timely repayment for purchases made. The secretary and I have devised some simple systems to improve record keeping, eg

explicit claim forms to enable refunds for the purchase of plants and other garden equipment.

When I took over as treasurer at very short notice last October, I was on a rapid learning curve. I have felt well supported by the committee and this has been most helpful. My thanks to these people.

I can confirm that the accounts are in order. A formal independent examination will be arranged in due course, following a request to the AGM to amend the constitution so that the wording refers to an “examination” of the accounts rather than a full “audit”. Our accounts are not complicated.

Annie Bourton Card

4.9.14

~~~~~

## **Friends of Thwaite Gardens**

### **AGM**

**7<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

### **Agenda**

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of last meeting
- 4 Matters arising
- 5 Acting Chairman’s Annual Report
- 6 Treasurer’s Annual Report
- 7 Election of Chairman
- 8 Election of Committee
- 9 Review of membership fees
- 10 Review of auditing procedure
- 11 Members questions and Comments
- 12 Any other business

# FRIENDS OF THWAITE GARDENS : BALANCE SHEET

**YEAR: 1.8.2013-31.7.2014**

## **INCOME**

|                         |                                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Membership fees         | £2,377.00                             |
| Donations               | £52.00                                |
| Open Day & Open Evening | £1,923 (includes £699.90 plant sales) |
| Sundries/ miscellaneous | £267.50                               |
| Entrance fees           | £48.00                                |

**TOTAL INCOME:** **£4,667.50**

## **EXPENDITURE**

|                                    |                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Hall hire                          | £54                      |
| Speakers                           | £255                     |
| Plants for Gardens:<br>materials)  | £1,328.82 (includes some |
| Sundries (compost, equipment, etc) | £2,401.89                |
| Refreshments (evening meetings):   | £43.43                   |
| Printing :                         | £264.40                  |
| Donations/gifts for services:      | £140.00                  |

**TOTAL OUTGOINGS** **£4,487.54**

**EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE: £179.96**

**BANK & CASH at 31.7.13:** **£5,620.48**

**BANK & CASH at 31.7.14:** **£5,845.92**

Annie Bourton Card 21.8.14



## **Friends of Thwaite Gardens**

### **Minutes of Annual General Meeting 8 October 2013**

- 1 Apologies: Doug James (see below): Maggie Hogan : Lynn Jones :  
Mavis May : Jean Major : Judith Moore : Barbara Russell : Erica Scaife  
Dot and Malcolm Sharman : Sue Swetez

The Secretary, Pam Bailey, chaired the meeting as the Chair and Treasurer, Doug James, was unable to attend due to ill health. He had, however, been about to resign due to other demands on his life, when illness intervened.

He has valiantly undertaken both roles for many years and the committee and Friends thanked him for undertaking the tasks and forwarded their best wishes for his full recovery and for the future.

- 2 The minutes of the 2012 AGM approved.
- 3 There were no matters arising from the above.
- 4 Chairman's Annual Report not available due to the above (1).
- 5 Secretary's Annual Report:

This had been previously presented in the Newsletter but Pam Bailey gave the following summary:

'This has been another successful year in the garden - despite the late Spring and cool start to early Summer, the volunteers had started early raising plants for sale on Open Day - Sunday May 19. This proved to be our busiest day ever with the highest number of visitors, sale of plants and refreshments, and new members enrolled.

Thanks were given to the dedicated volunteers and to the people who help in many ways on Open Day. We are very grateful.

Open evening was - again - a weather wash-out though thanks were given to some hardy folk who did turn out!

A special mention was given to the kind support of MKM Building Supplies for their support in providing and sponsoring materials needed for the Alpine House.

The volunteers also assisted with a visit by a well-organised and polite group of schoolchildren. We were able to answer questions and show them some very interesting plants - they particularly enjoyed the Evolution House.'

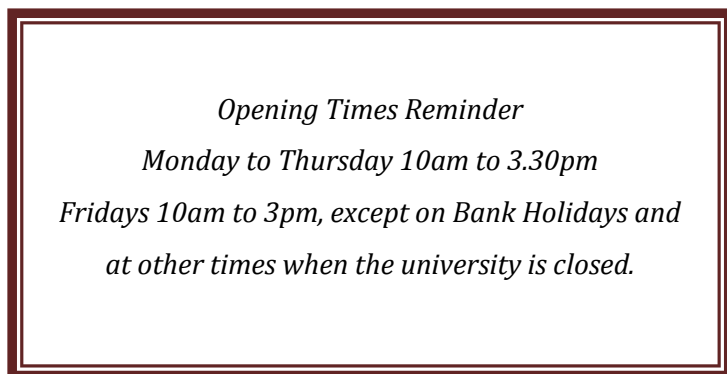
- 6        Treasurer's Annual Report not available due to the above (1).
- 7        Election of Chairman
- 8        Election of Committee Members.

All members will be given the opportunity to apply for committee, then, following the requisite 2 weeks' notice, there will be an extraordinary meeting to ratify those proposed and seconded at the meeting: John Killingbeck as Acting Chair; Annie Bourton Card volunteering to become Acting Treasurer; Pam Bailey, secretary; Norman Buck; Pat Foreman, Events Secretary; Jean Major; Vic Swetez; Mr Warburton, accountant.

9        Any Other Business

The secretary commented on how privileged the volunteers felt to be working at Thwaite, the team worked with enthusiasm and a keen interest. There have also been 2 girl horticulture students coming almost every Friday morning through this year, working in the greenhouses.

~~~~~



Charles Levitt

It was with great sadness to hear that Charles Levitt passed away on 26th July 2014.

Charles as one of the first volunteers was a very active and important part of the development of the Thwaite Gardens projects. In particular he was instrumental in the introduction of the Herb garden. Charles applied successfully for an Awards For All lottery grant which paid for the hardscaping of the garden. He then went on to design and plant the garden.

He loved escorting many groups around the gardens pointing out the more rare plants and trees often referring to the gardens as a “Theatre of Plants”

Charles was also a keen member of the Alpine Society and his own garden reflected this interest with a wonderful display of alpines.

Until his illness restricted his work in the gardens he gave many hours of his time in making the gardens a delightful place for Friends and visitors. Sometimes you would not have known that he was busy working away somewhere in the gardens had it not been for his bike propped up near the greenhouses.

He is sadly missed. Our condolences go to family and friends.

Pam Bailey on behalf of the Friends of Thwaite Gardens.



There is a first time for everything, as they say and this is the first time I have ever discussed a dead tree in this series; only recently dead however, barely cold in fact. It is the most recent and undoubtedly among the most serious losses from the collection. I had intended to cover this tree soon in the series anyway. But fate has intervened and it is too late. It reminds me once again, that our collection will not wait forever to be properly recognised.

Varnish trees, particularly good examples like ours was, are very thin on the ground. The nearest comparable specimen that I personally know of is at Sheffield Botanics, though I have not seen it for a number of years. For the record, then, I feel it appropriate to record the Thwaite tree for posterity.

The varnish tree is not well known, nor in most ways particularly striking. In winter it looks almost alarmingly gaunt with noticeably thick twigs on heavy looking radiating branches. The overall impression is that, in some indefinable way – there is a lot of it missing! Yet all is well, because in spring, admittedly very late in the season, the foliage appears, transforming the tree into one of a quite luxuriant aspect. Careless observers may be deceived at this point into thinking they are viewing some sort of ash tree but a closer inspection will reveal the curious flowers. These are individually very small and on the green side of dull white yet collectively conspicuous in cloud- like panicles. Tiny greenish yellow fruits appear later. In books the tree is said to achieve a mature height of around 20m and ours cannot have been too far from this.

The varnish tree has one great claim to fame, the clue to which is in its name. In its native lands (basically China and Japan) its sap was used as varnish to make the famous traditional lacquer furniture of those countries. And although it may not be well known itself, it has several renowned relatives in its botanical family (*Anacardiaceae*). Its most familiar ornamental garden cousins are the smoke bush (*Cotinus*) and the stag's horn sumach (*Rhus typhina*). Perhaps more surprising relatives are the very edible mango (*Mangifera indica*) and cashew nut (*Anacardium orientale*), yet paradoxically also an American plant whose toxicity is so notorious that although rarely grown in Britain, is known of even here – the poison ivy (*Rhus radicans*). This latter plant has extremely irritant sap. This quality, to a lesser degree is shared by the varnish tree and if injured it needs to be handled with care.

So what has caused the demise of our prized varnish tree? For once flooding does not seem to be the culprit – at least not directly, because it grew on raised ground near the hall. However, some years ago I noticed the toadstools of honey fungus (*Armellaria* sp.) growing at the base of the trunk. By the time toadstools of this fungus appear near a tree, one knows infection is well advanced and it is too late to do much about it. So I feared the worst. Yet no ill effects were apparent for several years.

Honey fungus is a very common disease of woody plants. It can kill rapidly and small trees can deteriorate from perfect health to death within a couple of years. The fungus invades the soil from dead wood – like old tree stumps, fence posts etc. from whence it sends out “rhizomorphs”- which resemble tough leather bootlaces (hence its alternative name – bootlace fungus). These are able to penetrate nearby healthy roots, spread into the tissues of the plant, then, having killed that victim, go on to attack others.

Tree species seem to vary considerably in susceptibility to the disease and many large trees seem to be able to live on with an attack for decades, perhaps even centuries. There are also supposed to be several strains of the fungus, some of which may be more aggressive than others. Some form of stress can also perhaps tip the balance in favour of the fungus. Possibly this

happened with our varnish tree – ever wetter soil conditions, which are known to favour the fungus.

Can anything be done about honey fungus? It cannot be “cured” directly, although chemicals have been tried in the past. Hygienic removal of any buried wood is possible but often impractical. Competition from other fungi is a potential, if rather difficult to manage possibility. At an arboretum where I used to work, I would always deliberately “infect” felled tree stumps with harmless fungi by placing toadstool caps on them after cutting. I have no scientific proof that this worked – but we never had honey fungus!

My great fear is that another area of honey fungus (or other root infection) is rife by the lake. Several willows have recently died here and this year our Japanese wingnut (*Pterocarya rhoifolia*), nearby, looks somewhat under the weather. This tree is arguably the very most valuable in our entire collection. As well as being very rare, it is, apparently, the largest example in England.

John Killingbeck Aug 2014

~~~~~

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

***Annual subscriptions are due on 1st November 2014.  
They remain at £7 per person or £10 for two people living at  
the same address***

***Anyone who has not paid by the Open Day 2015 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 2014 do not have to renew  
their subscriptions until November 2015.

## Winning display at Tatton Park



Above is the winning display at Tatton Flower Show 2014 entered by Dr Yvonne Golding (with a little help from Prof. Roland Ennos!)

For anyone interested in ferns, the website below is worth a look.

[www.ebps.org.uk](http://www.ebps.org.uk)

## PLANT OF THE MONTH --- JAPANESE ANEMONE (*Anemone x hybrida*)



For anyone with an appreciation of wild plants, of which there are so many thousands around the world, it is sometimes a puzzle why, from that vast selection, so few and such particular ones have been chosen to grow in our gardens. And curiously, once chosen, the task seems to be forever to “improve” these few until the range of forms and varieties available of each begins almost to rival the diversity of species already available in nature.

However, in the case of the Japanese anemone, the choosing of it as a garden plant is no mystery at all. The plant has so many virtues.

What we know as the “Japanese anemone” is in fact a range of forms and hybrids of wild *Anemone vitifolia* and *A.hupehensis* var.*japonica*, both native, broadly speaking, to different parts of China. Both originals have simple white flowers. The common white Japanese anemone – variety ‘Honorine Jobert’ is quite close in appearance to the wild species. I must confess this to be my own favourite type of the plant and it is a telling tribute that not only does this variety retain the clear simplicity of a wild flower, but has remained popular in gardens for around 150 years, from the time when it was first introduced.



A number of other forms occur, again the most popular ones having been established for about a century or so. About as frequently seen as the single white is pink variety 'Koenigin Charlotte'; although the flower form here is a little less perfect, with an attempt to fit in extra petals, giving it a slightly more dishevelled look. Indeed there are a number of other semi double varieties of both pink and white. Many of the varieties, one might note, have rather Teutonic, northern European sounding names. This provides evidence of the hardiness of the plant which is rarely damaged by the weather.

In most other respects, Japanese anemones are very easy to please. They seem happy in a variety of soil types except those that are dry and infertile. They are tolerant of sun or shade and but often look particularly good lighting up a fairly shady corner. Although sometimes a bit slow to establish if dug out and planted directly, once settled they are virtually trouble free and persist with almost no attention, to form strong spreading colonies. Indeed the plant performs best if left alone. However the greatest virtue of the Japanese anemone must surely be that it flowers for such a long period. Commencing in late summer, it continues unabated well into autumn all the time retaining a freshness that is rivalled by few others for so long.

Although about a metre or so tall, they are usually self supporting. Propagation is possible by division in the dormant season, but root cuttings are also a possibility if one requires a large number of plants.

John Killingbeck Sept 2014



## **Meeting to Discuss Concerns about Security and Dog Walkers at Thwaite Gardens**

This was held on 30<sup>th</sup> May, was chaired by the University's Director of Estates and was attended by 4 members of the Friends. John Killingbeck, Acting Chair of the Friends, was unfortunately not able to attend but

submitted a paper detailing the Friends' concerns, which were largely the same as those of the University.

Thwaite hall grounds are private property and as such there is no public access. However, members of the Friends are allowed access at times when there are members of University staff present, and are allowed to bring dogs with them so long as the dogs are kept on leads.

However, there are now many members of the public who are not Friends who bring their dogs on to site and allow them to run around without their leads. This has given rise to problems of fowling and of dogs being aggressive to other dogs and people and upsetting the ducks on the lake.

These issues were discussed in detail, and it was agreed that because the gardens are the property of the University, and therefore any mishap to visitors, permitted or otherwise, would be the responsibility of the University the problem needed to be addressed.

Actions to be taken to do this were:-

1. Parking permits would be issued to all staff and students with cars. Visitors parking permits would be issued to legitimate visitors on request.
2. Sufficient signs would be designed, containing either the university logo, or that of the security company acting for it, ensuring it was clear that the grounds were private, that dogs must be kept on leads and that cars parked without permits would be clamped.
3. The above rules would be enforced by security staff when on their rounds.

As a result of these measures, all members of the Friends are advised to carry their membership cards with them on visiting the gardens to prove membership, as any members of the public in the grounds without authority would be asked to leave.

Because of the practical problems for students and staff taking cars into Thwaite Hall grounds, it was agreed not to put gates on either of the Thwaite hall entrances. This would be monitored and reviewed again later if unauthorised entry continued to be a problem.

## **Contact Details**

### **Acting Chairman**

John Killingbeck  
7 Ash Grove  
Market Weighton  
YO4 33DY

01430 872312

Johnkillingbeck7878@btinternet.com

### **Secretary**

Pamela Bailey  
39 Priors 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

Tel 01482 846487

s.swetez@hull.ac.uk

### **Events Secretary**

Pat Foreman  
12 East Mount  
North Ferriby  
HU14 3BX

Tel: 01482 634091

patforeman@hotmail.com

***Friends' website:- [www.hull.ac.uk/thwaite-gardens](http://www.hull.ac.uk/thwaite-gardens)***

