

Issue No. 40

July 2015

Friends of Thwaite Gardens Newsletter




Open Day 2015

We had a very successful Open Day. Many thanks to all the volunteers who contributed their time and /or their cakes. The takings were as follows:

GATE:	£754.00	
REFRESHMENTS:	£412.54	(£439.90 - £27.36)
PLANT STALL:	£554.35	
TOMBOLA:	£179.00	
CACTUS STALL:	£15.00	(10% of their takings)
NEW MEMBERS:	£494.00	(plus £48 in renewals)
TOTAL PAID INTO BANK:	£2543.48	

GRAND TOTAL MADE ON OPEN DAY not including renewals & expenses for catering : **£2,468.12**

Annie Bourton Card, Treasurer
21.05.15



Open Day 2015

Our Open Day this year was again a very successful day.

Open Day is our invitation to all to come along and to enjoy this very special garden.

How many times has it been said ' Oh I have lived in Cottingham for many years and never knew this wonderful garden existed or that we have this opportunity to come around the garden'.

Yes it is an amazing oasis of calm and beauty. My thanks go to all of the volunteers who help on the day and to the Friday volunteers who work continuously throughout the year be it rain or shine. Their rewards are the

positive comments from visitors and seeing happy faces bearing plants sold on the day and also the ones who do not really want to leave at the close of the day.

Preparation for next year's Open Day is already in progress. If you have any ideas relating to Open Day please send these to myself at the address at the back of the newsletter.

As the tombola was a particular success this year we are already gathering prizes for next year. Should you have any unwanted gifts or know of any companies/businesses wishing to donate vouchers we would be very grateful. Thank you for your support.

Pam Bailey, Secretary, Friends of Thwaite Gardens.

Open Day Thanks

Just a note to add to the comments on a successful open day. We must thank the University for allowing us to have the event. Also thanks go to the Estates Department and the Department of Biological Sciences for the use of their facilities. Finally we must thank Estates ground staff, in particular Martin and Graham, who have to maintain the whole site to enable the Friends to carry out their projects. Vic Swetez

Diary DATES

AGM 6th October at 7.30pm at Cottingham Methodist Church

Autumn tour of gardens – 24th October 11am to 13.00 approx

Details of both the above in the next Newsletter

Dogs at Thwaite

Sadly the University grounds, particularly Thwaite Hall and gardens are blighted by a minority of irresponsible dog owners who allow their dogs to foul, and either do not clear it up or leave the used dog bag onsite. Their dogs have been seen chasing down the native wildlife and running around uncontrolled.

The dog fouling and loose dogs are presenting an unacceptable risk to University students, staff and guests.

It is down to all of us, Friends included, to try to abide by, set an example and endorse the rules the University has set down and ensure this message goes out to all users. We have invested in new signs to enforce this message so there is no excuse. If this unacceptable behaviour is witnessed it should be reported promptly to University Security with times, dates and descriptions of owners and dogs.

Unless the situation improves we cannot guarantee the safety of the University authorised users or the suitability of the land as an educational resource and as such we may have to consider a total dog ban.

Facilities Directorate



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

It is with great pleasure that I can tell you that 57 individuals or couples (ie 57 households) registered as new members on Open Day. I notice that quite a number are from the newly built houses nearby so I hope you will be able to enjoy having our gardens almost as an extension of your own. Indeed one gentleman hopped over his garden fence to enter the gardens and then came to pay a joining fee, he felt this wasn't noble at all as £12 per year acquired him an "infinity garden" -like being on holiday and having an infinity pool at one's hotel!

When I have entered all the new names on to the membership list (a fiddly task) and deleted the people who have not renewed their membership this year (ie to Oct 2015), I will tot up the total. Last year I reckoned we had between 500 and 550 members, most of whom live locally, so that makes us into a real community resource. Given that the Friends of Thwaite Gardens were created at a time (1998, I think) when the university had sought to sell the land, albeit to be met by public outcry, it is good to know that those same members of the public, and others, can continue to enjoy these lovely gardens, maintained in partnership between ourselves and the university.

Annie Bourton-Card

TREES OF THWAITE : TULIP TREE (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)



There are few trees that are almost instantly recognisable and very easy to remember. *Liriodendron* is one of them. We have two specimens in the garden, which from a distance might hardly be thought the same species. Both grow near the lake but the one to the west – which is the larger – appears much looser and more vigorous than its counterpart to the east which is quite a compact little tree. I cannot really explain why this should be. Perhaps due to soil conditions or different exposure? Nevertheless, one would still place our two trees together as the same.

The reason is that *Liriodendron* foliage is quite unique among hardy trees. The leaf looks vaguely maple like, except that the tip lobe is truncated as if cut off by scissors. It is said by some authorities that this leaf shape is the reason for the English name – “Tulip Tree”. Held up against the sky, leaves have a silhouette a little like a tulip flower. To me personally, this seems a little fanciful – perhaps people trying to be a bit too clever. It seems more obvious to most people that the name refers to the flower of the tree, which really does look like a tulip, or a Magnolia – to which the species is related. The flowers, although reasonably large and often abundant, are nevertheless not conspicuous because they are of a greenish yellow tinge with dull orange markings – striking enough on close examination but easily overlooked amid heavy foliage and lofty branches in summer when they bloom. In East Yorks., they generally appear at the end of June, through July.

Autumn brings out another of this tree’s finer qualities when the foliage turns a rich butter yellow before dropping. When bare, the curious cone- like fruits are visible. These consist of packed winged seeds which never seen to be viable here, however. Even the winter buds are distinctive, being a curious flattened paddle shape.

Although an unusual tree, *Liriodendron* is by no means rare and can be seen in even quite small private gardens. There is a variegated and a fastigiate form to boot. What is rare is to see a really good specimen, particularly as far north as here. Indeed it would probably be true to say that there are no good specimens in Northern England at all. It depends of course on what one considers ‘good’. There are, or have been odd specimens in East Yorks. pushing perhaps 20m in height – a small side of average for many trees in this area. But this is very stunted for *Liriodendron*. The reason for this is almost certainly climatic, our summers being just too cool compared to its native Eastern North American home. The finest examples in Southern England come in at a more spectacular 35m+ and trees of this size are widespread in France. Yet even this is nothing compared to the scale of mature American trees which can top 60m, 30m of which can be straight bole before the crown

branches out. In short this is a tree potentially of truly inspiring grandeur that we can only dream of in our Thwaite specimens.

Although I have said this tree could not be mistaken for any other, one exception might be the Chinese Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron chinense*), which is the only other member of the genus. However, the Chinese species is far rarer and hardly seen outside botanical collections. It is generally less robust, though with larger more deeply lobed leaves which have a purplish tint when young. The nearest example I know to here is at Newby Hall, Ripon.

One further curiosity is that in the timber trade, *Liriodendron* is known as “Yellow Poplar”. It is quite a valuable timber tree in America – something that initially led to the destruction of the majority of really big specimens by European settlers. Although naturally quite long lived, really old specimens are now very localised in its native forests, surviving in ‘old growth’ pockets which escaped felling and clearance wholesale for farmland in the eighteenth century.

J.Killingbeck May 2015

Butterfly Conservation App.



Butterfly Conservation have produced an excellent smartphone app for recording butterfly species. The app also comes with an excellent identification guide and is really user friendly. It would be fantastic if Friends considered downloading and using the app, enabling records of butterflies observed at the gardens (or beyond) to be included in analysis of national butterfly trends.

<http://butterfly-conservation.org/8803/irecord-butterflies.html>

Dr Darren Evans, Biological Sciences

PLANT OF THE MONTH: COLUMBINE (*Aquilegia vulgaris* and others)

"Oh Columbine, open your folded wrapper, where two twin turtle doves dwell!" Jean Ingelow



One of the more moving aspects of learning plants is that their names sometimes give an insight into the mind and imagination of those who named them. The name "columbine" refers to the Latin for a dove – Columba. But why? Well, if you look closely at a common columbine flower, with a bit of imagination you will see a little cluster of doves, complete with curved neck and beak, wings and a fan tail, facing inwards as if in confab. With this knowledge, the above, at first nonsensical snippet of poetry makes complete sense.

As if in deliberately humorous contradiction, the botanical name – *Aquilegia* – refers to the Latin for eagle–Aquila. The botanist who used this name obviously saw in place of the doves the bird that might eat them, the fierce head and hooked beak of an eagle. Equally valid, but perhaps a rather different outlook on life! Yet another common name for this plant is "Grannies Bonnets", for more obvious reasons than the previous names.

All the above refers to the shape of the columbine flower with its simple hooded bells hanging down with prominent spurs pointing up behind. In the common form of the plant, the charming structure is most easily seen. Common columbine is usually dark purple, though often dull pink also. It is quite hard to tell apart from wild columbine, a native plant, partly because many plants in the wild are actually garden escapes. Like any plant that can persist in a feral state, columbine is of the easiest cultivation, even considered a bit of a weed in some gardens where it seeds abundantly almost anywhere.

As with most popular flowers, there have been ‘improvements’ made. One type of change is to the shape of the flower. There are now upward facing types, frilly doubles, forms with extra-long spurs and those (‘Nora Barlow’ being the best known) which have lost their original form entirely to resemble eyeless daisies. A second change is to the colour range which includes shades of red, yellow, mauve/blue, white often in bi-colour combinations and combined with the morphological alterations above. All the above are either mutations, or hybrids of other species from around the world.

Which means there is another group of columbines, mostly grown by enthusiasts, which are the different wild species. On the whole these need rather more care and range from dwarf alpine forms, dainty red hummingbird pollinated American species, through to rather subtle greenish, yellow and scented species.

John Killingbeck

May 2015



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.*

FOREST THE SIZE OF YORKSHIRE

Those of you who visited us on Open Day may have seen the economic greenhouse (the first one you come to) with plants of foodstuffs we eat or drink regularly but may not know what the plant looks like. This summer we have added not only plant labels but also some of the packaging we find in British supermarkets and grocery stores. There is also a very life-like plastic banana resting on the banana palm, courtesy of Pam, our secretary. We have a grapevine with a bottle of wine, an olive tree with a bottle of olive oil, a fig tree with a packet of fig rolls, tea and coffee plants with associated packaging. Please note: all these containers are empty!

It is the tea I want to mention in particular. I drink Yorkshire tea because I like it, but if you do buy a box, have a look at what is written on the base and visit their website: www.yorkshiretea.co.uk. Follow the link to Respecting the Planet. Twenty years ago the, then, chairman saw a programme about deforestation and undertook to plant a million trees. Since then 3 million trees have been planted and the goal now is to re-forest an area the size of Yorkshire.

Annie Bourton Card
26.5.15

~~~~~

**Photograph on front cover courtesy of Richard Kemp**

## **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](http://www.hull.ac.uk/thwaite-gardens)***



© Richard S.