



Welcome to the Spring News Letter

For many people spring is the best time of the year the promise of new growth and greenery in the garden. Jubilee Gardens are no exception and as I write the wisteria is in full bloom, there are new leaves and blossom on the trees and the English bluebells we planted last autumn in the Queens Wood are flowering beautifully, providing us with a vibrant display of colour.



Unfortunately, however the gardens were subject to some criminal damage on 15th March. An apple tree sapling was destroyed, the Tibetan cherry tree was partially uprooted and several branches broken from trees elsewhere. Fortunately the Friends were able to step in and provide a new apple tree and also a replacement for the “wedding cake tree” in the Queen’s Wood which wasn’t thriving. These were planted at the first “working party” of the year on 21st March. Elsewhere in this newsletter you can catch up on some of the other news.

Working Parties: These recommenced on 21st March, a week late due to an adverse weather forecast for 14th March. Two new trees were planted and a start made to tidying up the various beds. There’s plenty more to keep us busy though in the coming months. Working parties take place on the 2nd Thursday of each month. We are however aiming to hold a couple on Saturdays, probably 8th June and 22nd June. The Saturday working party we held in the autumn to plant bluebells was well attended and gives an opportunity for members and their families who are otherwise busy on Thursdays to attend. We are hoping to plant some bedding plants on these occasions. All members are welcome to attend all working parties.

Forthcoming Events:

- **Etheldreda Fair:** Saturday 1st June. Last year we had a very successful stall on Palace Green and recruited numerous new members and sold a large number of plants to the public, the proceeds going to the Friends to spend on the Gardens. Last year the stall was manned by the committee members on a rota throughout the day. This year not all committee members can be present and it would be helpful if a few members could participate in a rota and perhaps man the stall for an hour or so on the day. **Volunteers welcome!**
- **Summer Tea Party:** Last year this was very enjoyable and successful and was held at Jane Blanchard's home. This year we have not yet fixed a date and venue but we do anticipate holding the event. Members will be notified when we have more information.
- **Saturday Working Parties:** As mentioned elsewhere we intend to hold working parties on a couple of Saturdays on 8th and 22nd June. These are in addition to the regular 2nd Thursday of the month events.



Summer Outing

Last year members visited the Barcham Tree Nursey between Ely and Soham. We had a guided tour and the whole event was interesting and informative. This year a visit to **Cambridge Botanical Gardens** is planned. This will take place on Monday 15th July in the evening. This will consist of a private guided tour and provide us with a overview of the gardens, some history and some seasonal highlights. As parking is limited we may be able to hire a coach to take us, however, at the time of writing there are not enough members wishing to attend to make this viable. If you do wish to come and have yet to notify Judith Lockyear (who is arranging the tour) please do so without delay. In the event of the coach not being possible we will look at alternatives. Either way the outing is still "on". You can contact Judith via the Jubilee Gardens website or at 2 Charles Graven Court, Ely CB7 4FN

Committee

Recently some long serving members have left the committee. Committee members must stand down for at least a year after serving three years unless taking up one of the “officer” positions. Jane has been secretary for the last three years and has worked hard on our behalf. Sheila has been associated with the Friends right from the conception of Jubilee Gardens and has been able to give valuable historical perspective to the deliberations of the committee.

Patricia Simmonds has also served three years but has stepped up as “Vice Chairman” which is a position which has been unoccupied for the last year or so

We have been able to welcome three new members: Rachel Ingham (as secretary) Niall O’Brian and most recently Philippa Royle.

There is still room on the committee for any member of the Friends of Jubilee Gardens who would like to contribute in this way. All ideas are welcome!

Membership

Membership of Friends of Jubilee Gardens is stable with most members choosing to renew membership. The membership subscription remains at £5 and we have no plans to increase this. We have, however had quite a number of generous donations towards the gardens and for specific purposes (eg refurbishment of the Dry Garden). Members also continue to



support the Friends’ working parties and give some of their valuable time. Thank you to all who continue to support the aims of Friends Jubilee Gardens. Without the membership we would not be able to contribute to the upkeep and development as we do

Future Projects

Some of the projects discussed previously have not yet happened. These include improvements and refurbishments to the Dry Garden and the Sensory Garden. Some old lavender has been removed from the Dry Garden but there is still much to be done. Unfortunately the council is, as ever, short of resources and have increasing responsibilities elsewhere and personnel are more thinly spread than ever. We on the committee

will continue to try and keep a focus on Jubilee Gardens and attempt to ensure that even if things happen slowly they still happen.

Signage: Most people will have noticed the new sign at the Queen's Wood which has been in place for some time now and has attracted favourable comment for its educational content and its physical robustness. The aim is to have similar signs at the Winter Garden and Dry Garden. The crumbling sign at the former met its final end at the hands of the vandals in March!

Other Events

As usual the gardens will play host to some other events

- Band concerts commence the 12th May with the Kings Lynn Town Band and continue on Sundays finishing on 1st September with Waterbeach Brass.
- Ely's Eel Festival begins this Friday 3rd May and lasts the whole of bank holiday weekend. The Eel Parade is on Saturday 4th May and begins at 10.30 at Cross Green and terminates in the Gardens.
- Ely Aquafest is on 7th July this year.
- Pride in Ely festival will happen on Saturday 10th August
- The Monster Triathlon is scheduled for Sunday 18th August

You can find out more about all of these events by visiting their respective websites.

One more thing which may be of interest to all you gardeners is the National Gardens Scheme (Gardens open for charity). This does not involve Jubilee Gardens but does involve some members. This happens on Sunday 9th June 12-6pm. Participating gardens are:

12 Chapel Street, 17b Hills Lane, 42 Cambridge Road, 5b Downham Road, Bishop Woodford House and the Bishop's House. Combined entry fee is £6.

I hope everyone has a great summer and that the gardens continue to be enjoyed by the public and all concerned.

John Crawford

Chairperson, Friends of Jubilee Gardens

