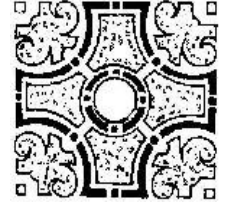




Merry
Christmas



Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens Newsletter ~ November 2011

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Report from the Trust's AGM which (once again) passed off without any surprises.

The Trust's AGM was attended by 12 Trustees, 2 members of staff and 33 members and volunteers. There were apologies received from 19 individuals which were duly noted.

The minutes of last year's AGM were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman who then introduced the Annual Report & Accounts with the Treasurer highlighting the salient points. The Treasurer reported on a simplified version of the accounts which also contained the budget for the current year. In response to a question from the floor, he explained that the Trust has been able to reduce its employment costs by deciding to not replace the General Manager and, in addition, by making some changes to the gardening staff.

The Chairman and Treasurer both thanked the members and volunteers for their help and support. There being no other questions the meeting resolved to accept the Annual Report and Accounts.

Bill Esselmont was re-elected unopposed as a Trustee for 3 years.

Members resolved that the membership fees for 2012 would be:-

Individual £16 Joint £26-50 Family £32 Individual Life £160 Joint Life £270

Feltons were reappointed to carry out the independent examination of the Trust's accounts

The formal business was followed by an open forum when the Chairman and Vice Chairman gave an update on the current overall position of the Trust and of the plans for the immediate future which include the suggestion that the shop be moved back to its original position.

Questions from the floor showed that members and volunteers had concerns in the following areas:-

1. That paying guests/residents at the Hall would have free access to the gardens. It was explained that the Trustees were aware of the problem caused by the current licence agreement and were seeking to arrive at a satisfactory arrangement with the Hotel Management.
2. Concern was expressed about the influence of the NT via the covenant which members felt was threatening the future of the entire site.
3. David Adams explained that we were still waiting for completion of the conveyance of the land needed in order for the Trust to proceed with the next phase of the new Heritage Centre project. This would entail a detailed technical evaluation of the plans leading to Building Regulation Approval.
4. In response to a question from the floor the Chairman agreed to ask the Gardens Committee to reconsider the suitability of the water feature which was removed from the Court Yard last year for safety reasons.
5. A number of members volunteered to help re-decorate the visitor centre when the shop is relocated.

Shop Update

The proposal to relocate the shop generated much discussion among the volunteers that run it.

After reconsidering the arguments for and against, the Management Committee have decided that there are more important matters to deal with this winter, but it is hoped that the room can still be redecorated during the closed season

Membership Renewal

Members of the Trust will find a membership renewal form included with this Newsletter.

Staffing

Some of you will have heard by now that the Management Committee decided at the end of October, with some regret, to terminate Yoke's appointment as head gardener.

Dave Bennett

Report on Recent Events

As details of the profits made from the Crescent Theatre and Central England Concert Band were not available for the last Newsletter, I would like to report that these were as follows:-

The Crescent Theatre - £713.23

Central England Concert Band £1,237.02

The following events have taken place over the last few months.

Animals in Hands returned to the Gardens again on Thursday 11 August 2011.

Information on how animals adapt in the wild was provided and visitors, both old and young, had the opportunity to handle them including a Leopard Gecko, a Tarantula, a Python and a Horned Frog. Attendance was slightly up on the event held in June, which resulted in a profit of £525.51

Falconry Display - Sunday 20 August

Unfortunately the weather was unsettled in the morning and visitor numbers were affected. The birds were exhibited throughout the day with actual flying displays taking place at around 12.30 and 3.00 pm. The highlight of the afternoon was a hunting demonstration by Scratchy the Hybrid Falcon. The profit raised by this event was £678.25.

Car Boot 18 September

The weather was good, which resulted in an excellent turnout of actual car-booters and buyers. The profit raised was £801.43

Quiz Evening – Thursday 29 September

This was held in the Visitor Centre here at the gardens and attendance was very good, indeed it would not have been possible to squeeze anyone else in! The evening included a Fish and Chip Supper and was a great success. Our thanks to everyone involved with the organisation and for supplying the prizes for the raffle and of course to the winning team. The profit raised was £289.54.

Apple Day Sunday 2 October

What a difference to last year, we could not believe our luck with the weather!

Visitors could taste and purchase forgotten varieties of apples and pears, and enjoy freshly squeezed juice from apples grown in our orchard. The displays in the Summer House and Green House provided a great deal of information. There were apple themed activities, competitions and stalls. The Glorishers of Brummagem performed Molly Dancing and the children made apple shaped mosaics. There was a very good atmosphere and the profit raised was £1,901.64.

Sue Brain
Administrator

Pennies Appeal

The total to 14 September 2011 is £3,482.00

A very big 'thank you' to everyone who donates to the Pennies Appeal. Every penny is appreciated and every penny goes to keep the gardens growing.



June Esslemont

Remaining Events for 2011

Flower Demonstration at Notcutts – The Flower Demonstration at Notcutts will take place on Tuesday 22 November commencing at 7.00pm. The demonstration this year is entitled "A Sparkling Christmas" and will be given by Jayne Edmonds who is a NAFAS Area Demonstrator and Judge. Tickets cost £7.00 including tea or coffee and can be purchased from Castle Bromwich Gardens or Notcutts.



**CHRISTMAS EVENT -
Sunday 4 December 12.00 – 4.00pm**

Volunteers – if you can help on the day please ring Sue Brain and let her know of your willingness to lend a hand. If you have any unwanted gifts suitable for the Tombola stall, please bring them to the office before Monday 28 November. Also if you can bake any cakes, pies or biscuits for sale on the Cake Stall these would be very much appreciated.

Ideas for new events would be welcome, please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any suggestions and when or if there are any changes to your contact details, especially if you have an email address that you have not told us about.

Thank you all for your continued help and support.

Sue Brain

Volunteers Re-registration Forms

If you are a volunteer, enclosed with this Newsletter there is a re-registration form for next year (2012). It would be appreciated if you could complete and return this form to the office as soon as possible.

Volunteers – Visitor Services Advance

Notification - A meeting for all volunteers, except Garden Volunteers who have already had a meeting, will take place in the Visitor Centre at the Gardens on Sunday 8 January 2012 at 2.00 pm.

Guide Training - Training will take place early in the New Year. If you are interested in becoming a Guide for the Gardens and would like to attend a training session could you please let the office know.

BEST WISHES TO YOU ALL

FOR CHRISTMAS

AND THE NEW YEAR

FROM

THE TRUSTEES AND STAFF



Garden News Update

Hello everyone

In my last newsletter I referred to “roll on the Autumn”; well, what an Autumn this has been. As I write out this newsletter report for our November issue I note we have still not had a temperature drop of below 0 degrees, in fact the temperature has been well above this figure. I have never experienced, in over 60 years of gardening, a season where the Summer bedding has done so exceptionally well, especially the Geraniums and Non-Stop Begonias. Autumn bedding and bulbs have now been delivered for the gardens and with the wondrous support of our lady volunteers these will shortly be planted in their allotted places through the gardens

Those of you who visit the gardens regularly will be pleased to know that the WEED problem, particularly in the Upper Wilderness, has been addressed and most areas are now free from weeds.

The heavier work of lifting and dividing many of the shrubs in the Upper Wilderness has been undertaken by our men volunteers. Many of the shrubs had spread into dense thickets and now look far happier with daylight around them.

Path widening will be ongoing throughout the winter months in the central areas of the Upper Wilderness. The earlier work to the paths is making a great improvement to the area.

The other most urgent task is the clearing of fallen leaves (yes, you’ve guessed it) Holly and other debris from the areas of the Lower Wilderness, where hopefully come the Spring, we will once again have drifts of Snowdrops and Aconites for our Snowdrop Weekend, which is planned for the second weekend in February.

With the departure of our Head Gardener I will do my best to ensure the gardens, with the support of Gordon, Steve and Fran and, of course, the services of the garden volunteers, continue to flourish and be as welcoming as ever for you all in the Spring.

David Howell
Chairman Gardens Committee

Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens Social Group.

The social group was formed two & half years ago as a continuation of the Friends meetings which were held along the same format. The idea of the social group is to meet once a month to hear a speaker, have refreshments, generally socialise and to pass on any surplus cash, after expenses, to the Trust to assist in running the Gardens. Since its formation we have passed £355 to the Trust, but due to increasing costs, over the last 8 months we have barely broken even and we cannot continue on this basis in the expectation that the Trust subsidises the Social Group.

It has, therefore, been decided that the November meeting will be the last for the time being, especially in view of the fact that the weather in December & January can be so unreliable and present difficulties. If anyone is prepared to take over the running of the Group, someone with fresh ideas on how to increase attendance and find new speakers I will be happy to pass on any information I have. I have informed the Trust that I wish to resign as Speakers’ Secretary after the November meeting and I would therefore like to thank everyone who has supported the Group, especially those who have helped with refreshments, overseeing the door and the raffle and organising speakers.

Ivor Hathaway

Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens - Education Project Update

School visits peaked in the couple of weeks before the summer holidays and there was another rush in September; so many thanks to all my wonderful volunteers.

The workshops covered a number of topics including the Tudors, Victorian Children and Sensory Exploration of the Gardens. A number of visits later focussed on Apple Day and apples with a range of varieties being used to make apple juice, some of which were more successful than others. Studies on the history of the Bridgeman family were able to be combined with visits to the church thanks to the kind assistance of David Adams.

Fruit and vegetables from the garden were used as part of the Sensory Garden workshops, including beetroot from the Homebase area which was picked and cooked on the day. The potatoes in the Dig for Victory garden were harvested in September and other vegetables grown by the children in the main kitchen garden (including onions, broad beans, cabbages) have been very successful.

I have been working regularly with the children at Guardian Angels Roman Catholic Primary School, Shard End, to help develop their garden area. A range of vegetables and flowers have been grown and in September the wallflowers were transplanted by the children to the beds at the front of the school. Harvesting of cauliflowers, cabbages, beetroot, runner beans and potatoes has been a regular job.

At the recent Alcoa presentation event we were approached by the Head of Audley Primary School in Stechford and I have now started helping its pupils to maintain the garden areas around the school. These extra activities are generating welcome additional funds for the Trust.

Ann Brookman, Education Officer