



Newsletter

Issue 23

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Welcome to our 23rd Newsletter, bringing you up to date with the most recent news from The Biblical Garden Elgin.

Have any of you come across the following Chinese proverb?

'If you want to be happy for a short time, get drunk:

happy for a long time, fall in love;

happy for ever, take up gardening.'

I think we would all agree that gardening is certainly good for us (aye in spite of the aching joints!)

AGM 2023

There was a good turnout for the AGM of The Friends on 29th August 2023. The new committee consists of:

Nick Chambers, Chairperson

Val Weston, Vice Chairperson

Monika Jakiel, Treasurer

Ann Copland, Secretary

Jill Stringer, Membership Secretary

Lea Bernard Gordon Forsyth

Margaret Forsyth Nancy Jamieson

Shirley Jeffrey Karen MacArthur

Davie Sharp Maggie Sharp

You will notice that the names of John Sherry, previous Chairperson and Jules Govier, previous treasurer are missing from the Committee. They both decided it was time to retire, though we are glad to say they are still members of The Friends. John was Chairperson for an amazing 18 years and Jules was treasurer for 10 years. During that time, they both put in many extra hours, especially on sourcing funding.



John trying out the new lawn mower.

During their tenures, they kept The Friends on the straight and narrow. John has seen The Garden evolve from its infancy and they have both been instrumental in developing it over the years, moving forward with various projects e.g. creating the rock garden, replacing the old wooden signage with stone plinths and illuminated letter-type boards, replacing the rotten rose arbour with the new metal one and more recently developing the 'new' area at the back, by the flood alleviation works. They certainly deserve a bit more time to themselves now. A very big thank you to you both.



The old wooden rose arbour

We are grateful to Nick Chambers and Monika Jakiel for taking on the roles of Chairperson and Treasurer respectively. For those who do not know them, Nick is on the staff at Moray College working with the Horticulture students. Monika has also been on the Horticulture staff but has now set up her own gardening business. She has kindly contributed an article about a project she is working on with the students.

AGM and Subs

Before Covid, The Friends held their AGM in May and subs were due at that time. Due to Covid restrictions etc, the AGM in recent years has been held at the end of August and there has been some confusion as to when subs were due. Committee has taken the decision to revert to holding the AGM in May and subs will be due at that time.

Members and Contact List

The contact list for The Friends is large. Some of our contacts are Life Members, some are Annual Members but the majority are not actually paid up members. Some of the people on the list are unknown to us and we are now thinking it might be time to prune that list. How do we go about it so that we do not lose anybody who is interested in The Garden? It would be grand if on reading

this, you would contact us
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to let us know if you would like to remain on the list or be taken off it.

Date for your diary

In March 2024, The Friends will be 20 years old. To mark the occasion, The Garden will be open under the Open Garden Scheme on Saturday 4th May 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. More details in the next newsletter.

Presentation

John and Jules were invited to a Committee meeting to be held at The Garden on 5th December. Little did they know that it was to turn into a special evening, with the presentation of an engraved vase to each of them to thank them for all their work on behalf of The Friends. In fact, that meeting did not take place due to the treacherous icy conditions, but it happened on Saturday 9th December instead. There was a good turnout of Friends and 2 students, one of whom, William, presented John and Jules with gifts. A happy time was had. Photos on next page

Feedback, contributions, ideas for future articles always welcome.

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Merry Christmas to you all



Nick presents John with vase



Jules and John



John and Jules were persuaded to take the vases from the boxes





The vases are engraved with wild flowers round the top (honeysuckle, wood anemone, harebell, dog rose, lily and foxglove) with the logo of The Friends underneath.



Time for tea and cake!





Pic. The design of “Yin Yang / An Eye Bed”

M.Jakiel 2023

This project was created when I saw an empty sunflower bed that was almost shaped like an eye.

In the beginning there was only one side with a wooden border. Horticulture students learned how to assemble a curved wooden frame after we shaped the bed into an eye.

The Yin Yang symbol has clear, sharp angles, so we decided to use a metal edge that will be attached to the ground. The inner parts will most likely be filled with smooth stones in two colours - white and black. The outer field was planted with a low, white-flowering perennial *Lamium maculatum* 'White Nancy'.

The border will be a permanent feature and due to its low height, it will not disturb the view of the rest of the garden.

Yin Yang bed refers to several subjects:

1. **Golden Ratio**, is a ratio between two numbers that equals approximately 1.618. This ratio will be reflected in the ratio of two fields, the inner field of the eye (Yin Yang symbol) with the outer field - an ellipse bordered by a box hedge.

Golden Ratio is one of the most common mathematical ratios in nature. We see this ratio everywhere from majestic landscapes like the Pyramids of Giza and the Mona Lisa to modern-day logos such as Twitter and Pepsi. Golden ratios are unique because of their golden proportion.

2. Low box hedging refers to **Knot Gardens**. They were first created in the 1550s, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, and were popular for wealthier homes. If a garden was too small for a full knot design, people would take inspiration and use geometric shapes in their planting, ornaments and beds. Horticulture students will practise pruning the low box hedge within their courses.

3. The ‘Yang’ field will indicate North, Yin – South.

4. The yin and yang symbol (or taijitu) shows a balance between two opposites with a portion of the opposite element in each section. In Taoist metaphysics, distinctions between good and bad, along with other dichotomous moral judgments, are perceptual, not real; so, the duality of yin and yang is an indivisible whole.

Davie's Column

The Poppy

The Papaver, commonly known as poppy, is a family of around fifty annual and perennial plants found worldwide except in South America. These plants vary significantly in height, petal number (ranging from 4 to 6) and colour, from red and white to the popular Himalayan blue and the yellow Welsh poppy. The most well-known variety is the blood-red *P. rhoeas*, also known as corn or Flanders poppy, which has become a symbol of the soldiers who died in World War 1.

Poppy flowers date back to 2700 BC when they were grown and cultivated in the Mediterranean primarily for their medicinal properties, such as mild sedatives. They are a source of codeine, and morphine may be extracted from them.

When searching for autumn bulbs in the Peloponnese, Maggie and I visited a few ancient archaeological sites, primarily looking for the various forms of cyclamen. We would come across temple ruins with single or three flowers engraved in the stone by the doorway. It was not until visiting the museum at Mycenae that we found a probable answer regarding the flower engravings. Our findings showed that the poppy flower is also associated with Morpheus, the god of sleep and dreams. The morphine derived from the poppies is also named after the god Morpheus. The goddess of agriculture and nature, Demeter, it was said, created poppies to help her sleep and ease the pain on the loss of her daughter, Persephone, who was the goddess of spring.

The white poppy is an annual plant that can grow up to one metre, and its flowers up to 10cm. The flower opens facing the ground, but when the petals unfold, its stem, full of green leaves, straightens up and faces the sky. The plant blooms through August for roughly three weeks. This plant also grows in the northern fields of France and Belgium and can be seen in central and southern Europe and Asia Minor. It usually grows wild and is expected to be seen among crops. Today, the plant is grown for its oils and medicinal benefits. Since the early 1930s, the white poppy has symbolised peace. The Co-operative Women's Guild started selling the symbol to carry the message "never again," in contrast to red poppies commemorating those sacrificed in war.

