

Grass Roots

Issue 1

June 2005



Welcome to the first edition of *Grass Roots*, the newsletter written by the Friends of the Harris Garden.

Your committee has decided to publish a newsletter about once every two months. To complement the more in-depth writing in *Harrisiana*. This is the first experimental version and we invite your suggestions for future editions.

It is intended that we use this as an information exchange and to keep members in touch, so we do need your written thoughts, comments and photos please. This edition contains the news from the Committee Meeting on Tuesday 17 May in Plant Sciences and some additional information on volunteering and a proposed visit day.

Do let David Hewitt know if you prefer to receive the newsletter electronically and check that he has your current email address.

Above all we hope that the newsletter will help both new and existing members keep in touch and get involved.

Letters and articles and photos to Jo Shockley, 12 Somerton Gardens, Earley Reading RG6 5XG
jo.shockley@onetel.net

Getting bigger

This year's open days attracted a record number of new members. We hope to design a welcome pack for them shortly.

Although members do not usually need to show their membership cards we will be experimenting with a more durable laminated card and hope to have designs ready by the next Committee meeting.



Harrisiana

The next issue is due later this summer and Stephen would welcome suitable articles.

We will also include the minutes of the AGM for future reference. Please let David Hewitt know if you would like to receive this electronically. Contact David Hewitt lullenden@hotmail.com

Volunteers - your garden needs you!

This much needed project looks likely to get off the ground now.

The 'Forth Bridge Strategy' will start the ball rolling. Volunteers will let Julia know when they will be coming for the first time. Julia will introduce them to the garden, locate the tool store and they will work on a priority area. Volunteers need only sign in before they start on subsequent visits and

can either use the Friends' tools or bring their own.

Julia would like help with weeding before the next open day, in aid of Air Ambulance on Sunday 19 June. Volunteers should let Julia know by e-mail or by phoning at 10am or 12:30pm when they would like to come in. Julia will meet them at an agreed time and introduce the system.

Once volunteering is established we can look at setting up regular working parties.

Later in the year we hope that Friends can work on specific areas - in collaboration with Richard, as the garden's designer and director.

Contact Julia at j.wesley@reading.ac.uk
Or telephone her on
0118 378 8070
0118 378 7953

Visitors wanted

Julia would like to enlist your help in keeping the garden beautiful.

The garden also attracts local teenagers who occasionally cause damage, particularly on Friday evenings. Visiting Friends could provide an additional pair of eyes to discourage vandalism. Report incidents to **Security 01189 378 7799**, or in an emergency dial 01189 378 6300

What's in a name?

Work has now begun on an inventory of plants in the garden in need of labels. The next step will be to consult the Herbarium for details of provenance. There may yet be an opportunity for a Friend to undertake the task of data input.

We hope to begin labelling the plants soon.

Charitable Status

David Hewitt with the help of Andrew Hutt and Ted Bell is investigating the process of gaining charitable status for the garden. This could have a huge impact on the value of any future legacies. David hopes to report back to the next Committee meeting.

Open Days

The Friends hope to hold at least one Open Day in 2006 to raise funds solely for the garden. While we recognise the value of charity days, we also want to raise funds to make the garden even more successful.

We also hope to expand the range of stalls in addition to the renowned plant sales.

Friends' Workshop

We are also keen to respond to the requests for a Friends' workshop day and will be looking at suggestions for topics to be included for 2006. Please let us know of any suggestions.

Spending Plans

Plans for a **greenhouse** in the Walled Garden await decisions by the University.

Jo Shockley undertook to investigate how we might obtain **sponsorship** from local businesses to fund gardening hours. A clearing system operates in the University so we need to make sure we do not duplicate applications for funding.

Richard will liaise with Julia to ask if **replacement tools** could be provided by the Friends for use in volunteering sessions and he will also ask for her thoughts on a litter bin.

We will investigate whether the Typography Department at the University can design **publicity signage** to promote recruitment at open days in 2006. Friends should note that this will incur some costs.

We will also investigate the purchase of additional **seats** to promote enjoyment in the garden and Richard is to ask the university about the logistics of improving the paths for disabled access. There could be a cost implication depending on how the work is paid for.

We are also interested in having **postcards** of the garden printed for inclusion in the new members' packs, for sales at open days and use for publicity. Stephen is to follow up this initiative.



Photographs of bluebells and pansies in the Harris Garden taken this year are reproduced by kind permission of Caroline McAslan.

If you have photographs you would like to share with Friends please contact David Hewitt or Jo Shockley

A tour of the Forbury Gardens and RISC roof garden

David Hewitt has kindly arranged for Friends to visit these two local gardens in Reading on **Friday 24 June**. Friends can join the tour for the whole day or opt to attend either for the morning or afternoon. The schedule is as follows

11.0 Meet at Forbury Gardens for a conducted tour with Carolyn Jenkins

12.30 Walk to RISC in London Street

13.00 Meet Steve Jones, the designer of the garden in the RISC café for lunch

14.00 Tour of the RISC Roof Garden with Steve Jones

15.00 Depart

Members may be interested to see an article about the RISC garden in the latest issue of the RHS magazine 'The Garden'

Please let David Hewitt know by Friday 17 June if you would like to participate: address: 11 Wellington Avenue, Reading RG2 7BP; e-mail: lullenden@hotmail.com or telephone 0118 987 2119.