



FRIENDS OF
OLD DURHAM GARDENS

NEWS Spring 2016

Issue 9

Open days and volunteering sessions

24 March – 30 September 2016
Thursdays & Sundays 2.00-4.00 pm

Dear Friends

Spring is here and there is much to progress report in the gardens. We have been busy over the closed season with some organisational developments and major works in the gardens.

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

In November we became a registered charity, as agreed at the AGM last year. Benefits include greater opportunities for securing project funding, favourable VAT rates and maximising donations through Gift Aid.

Composting Toilet

We are currently installing a disabled access composting toilet (with sedum roof) behind the north wall. Thanks to our local councillors whose generous donation provided us with a substantial grant for this project.



Electricity and water

We now have an electricity supply to the Gazebo, the south end of the walled garden for events, and the undercroft. At the same time as we dug the trenches for electricity we took the opportunity of installing water pipes around the walled garden. The gardens have taken a battering – but they will recover!



Annual General Meeting

Thursday, 21 April 2016 – 6.30-8.30 pm

County Hall, Committee Room 1B

After a short meeting there will be a presentation and display on progress in the gardens and an opportunity to chat informally with the trustees

Fruit Trees – Walled Garden

Espaliered fruit have been planted all round the walled garden with oak frames on the west and north walls and wires on the west and south walls.



Northumbrian Water staff volunteer digging holes for espaliers



Councillors, trustees & volunteers planting trees along north wall

Parterre – Walled Garden

We are currently discussing the planting of the channels. Watch this space!

Terrace Border – Lower Garden

We will shortly be planting flowering climbers on the walls of the terrace borders.

Volunteering



Durham University



Raking the meadow

Volunteers help out on Thursday and Sunday afternoons 2.00-4.00 when the gardens are open to visitors. In addition, a friendly bunch of people meet on Thursday mornings 10.00-12.00. Some have a wide knowledge of all things horticultural and others less so. The common link is enthusiasm and a desire to see Old Durham Gardens progress and blossom. They tackle anything from weeding, pruning, edging, moving manure, planting – whatever needs doing. All welcome.

★ **Thinking about joining us?**

You might just enjoy it . . .

Please contact Angela on 0191 3865188 or email us though our website: www.olddurhamgardens.co.uk

Charity No: 1164516

Website: www.olddurhamgardens.co.uk

Email: olddurhamgardens@gmail.com

Find us on:



Trustee and volunteer hours

In 2015 over 3,000 hours was spent by the trustees, volunteers and community groups either gardening, greeting visitors, events, funding bids and a range of policies, management plans and other essential (but not always exciting) paperwork. Huge thanks to everyone who supported Old Durham Gardens with their time last year.

Monthly visitor numbers

In 2015 we had 646 visitors who signed our visitor record, an increase of 150 from 2014. Many visitors walk through the lower gardens throughout the year so the total number of people who benefit from the work of the volunteers is far greater.

Music in the Gardens 2015



Over 400 people came to the gardens in September to enjoy the music, the company, the food and drink and the beauty of the walled garden.

Our thanks go to all who helped with the event, especially the musicians who made the afternoon such a pleasure: Quintessential Voices, Step This Way with Bones Creek Band, CBar Saxes, Crook and Weardale Choral Society, Redheughers Ceilidh Band and Durham Harmonics Vocal Group.

Spring walks

In 2015 we continued to provide a series of walks, guided by Martin Roberts, including Durham Castle and the area around Old Durham. These were both highly popular events and we plan to build on these in 2016.

Events for 2016

Music Afternoon - 10 July 1.30-4pm

This year we are planning to hold an informal music event in the walled garden on Sunday 10 July. There will be two music groups and light refreshments available.

Heritage Open Days - 10-11 September

As usual the gardens will be part of this event and will be open to visitors on the Saturday and Sunday.

Music in the Gardens – 11 September
Our major event of the year will be held on the Sunday of Heritage Open Days. Several music groups have already expressed an interest in joining us. Drinks and refreshments will be served in the marquee. With luck, we hope that once again the weather will be kind to us.

Donations

We have been grateful for a number of donations last year towards the cost of plants and other gardening essentials. Together with membership subscriptions these donations, irrespective of size, are very much appreciated and help us to continue to maintain and develop the gardens.

Funding the work of the gardens

Finance is always a challenge and we thank all Friends, Durham County Council, visitors, donors and grant awarding bodies for their continued support. We were successful in obtaining funds from the Durham Area Action Partnership (AAP) local councillors Neighbourhood Budget, Area Budget and County Durham Community Foundation Small Grants Budget. We also received funding from the Royal Horticultural Society's It's Your Neighbourhood Fund plus the National Lottery Awards4ALL process. We will keep applying for funding to continue with the plans to improve the gardens.

In 2016- 2017 our tasks include:

- Planting the parterre channels
- Planting the terrace border
- Pruning and shaping the pyramidal yews
- Cutting and shaping hedges
- Updating the website
- Publishing Old Durham Garden guides
- Working with community groups
- Exploring more open events
- Collecting memories of the gardens
- Enjoying the blossom . . . and pruning all 27 espalier fruit trees in the walled garden

