

GARDENING

October – November 2023 Newsletter

Burnby Hall Gardens 10th July

The weather forecast was iffy to say the least. Our leader, Diane had planned the event to the last detail, even to the extent of visiting in person the week before. So it was that a group of intrepid Du3a members met together at the interchange to board a charabanc to whisk them off to Burnby Hall Gardens.

The 75-minute journey melted away as the chatter-filled vehicle trundled through the summer countryside and in what seemed no time at all we were there, gathering together like excited school children. The assistant manager gave us a run-down of the history of the estate and how it had been developed to become a favoured venue for gardeners and photographers alike. The introduction was well received and following a few more directions from Diane it was agreed that we would all meet back at the bus in a few hours' time.

Everyone broke off into little groups then. It was getting on for lunch time and some found their way to the restaurant while others scurried away to investigate the horticultural delights and wonderful views on offer.



The many gardeners in our party were absorbed by the beautifully tended beds, the rock gardens and a delightful 'Stumpery' all with meandering pathways and plantings.

The highlight for me was the lake, with a huge collection of different water lilies and what seemed a massive shoal of overfed carp, ready to turbulate the calm waters whenever one of us approached the shore line.

After a lovely day we all boarded the bus for home, and the chatter continued as we compared notes and decided that it would be pleasant to return in the future, perhaps to experience the delights of autumn or perhaps spring.

Chris Woolven







August – September 2022 Newsletter

The 'Zoom' gardening group – plant swap afternoon.



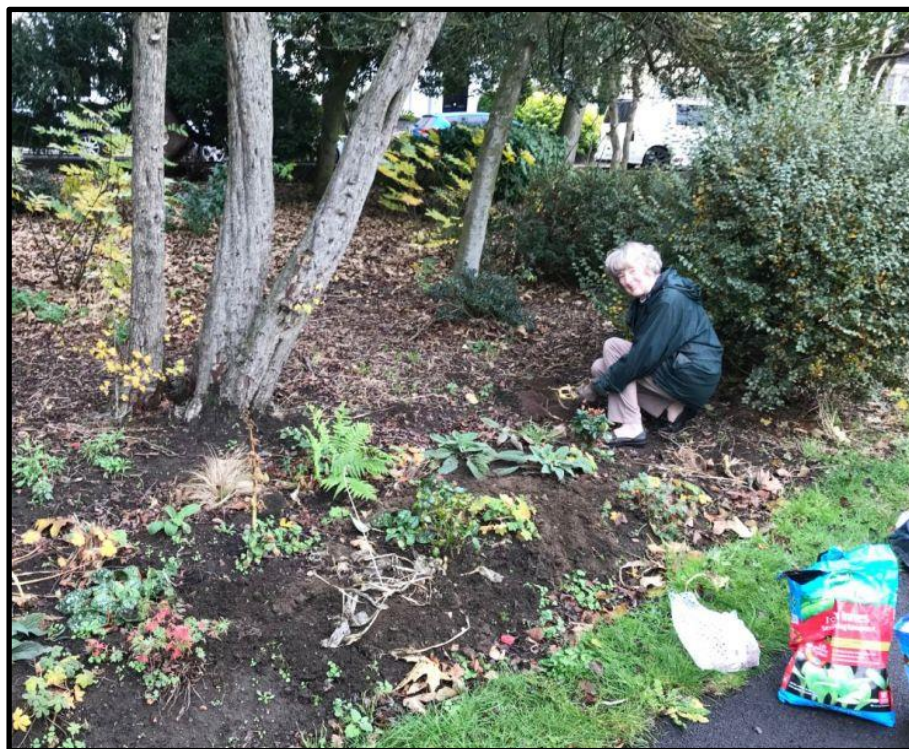
February – March 2022 Newsletter

Last summer, using plants kindly donated by our members, a small garden was created in Regents Square. Like all gardens it needs to be tended and planted for all year round colour and interest.

The gardening group have been keeping it weed free and this autumn have planted bulbs for a vibrant show in the spring. A big thank-you goes especially to Alan Whittaker, Ann Darby, Helen Smith, Angela Thew, and Val Grant (shown in photo planting iris) for providing bulbs.

Unfortunately, the woodland soil is lacking in organic matter so one of the first jobs in the new year will be digging in rotted manure and homemade compost. If you would like to help with this project, then please contact Val Grant or Diane Woolven from the gardening group for details.

Diane Woolven



August – September 2021 Newsletter

The Happy Gardeners

This year May has been even wetter than last year, and there is only one way to describe the weather this month of May, two thousand and twenty one and that is by borrowing the name of the group called, "Wet Wet Wet".

Because of the bad weather, very little gardening has been done. However, we in the U3A gardening group have made up for the lack of hands-on gardening by talking about our gardens at Zoom meetings.

During our working lives many of us do not have the time and energy for any serious gardening but, once retired, lots of us blossom into serious gardeners. We begin to read gardening magazines, watch the garden programs on the television and visit the gardens of the many grand houses in the area.

We also make friends with like-minded people in the garden group. Members of the group pass on the names of suppliers and all things to do with gardens, such as fencing, garden huts, garden furniture, tools, and plants and also inform fellow members if those suppliers are reliable or not.

As written above, we talk to each other and we learn from each other. We also have specialist talks about the very diverse aspects of growing things, such as the science of the soil in which plants grow and garden pests. There is always someone in the group who has specialist knowledge and experience of some kind.

The garden group was originally formed by Joan Robinson. Joan unfortunately passed away and it was then led by Brenda and Allen Whitaker who had, for reasons of health, after a number of years, to resign as the Garden group leaders. This then led the way for our present group leaders Diane Woolven and Valerie Grant, whose scientific knowledge is backed up by their vast experience of practical gardening.

We do have what people call 'Jollies'. That is, we have group trips to garden centres and to places of interest to gardeners. Most important of all is that those in the group with knowledge pass it on to others who, like me, know very little about gardening but do like pottering around and looking as if we know what we are doing. Gardeners, I have discovered, are an extremely kind and helpful group of people and are generous with their time, advice and friendship.

Betty Alexander



Doncaster Garden Project

U3A day took place on June 2nd this year. All over the country U3As planned a variety of different activities to celebrate and promote the U3A as an organisation.

In Doncaster we hosted a Walking Cricket tournament and many of you will have seen the write-up in the Free Press. In addition the gardening group decided they would like to plant a flower bed in the town. Wendy Hattrell walked around looking - no beds in St Sepulchre Gate, Baxter Gate or the Marketplace. A call to DMBC later and we decided Regent Square, off South Parade (behind the Regent Hotel) might be the best place.

That bit was easy! Then came the form filling. Thankfully the wait for the go ahead didn't take too long so on two very warm mornings in early June Wendy, Diane Woolven and I set about establishing the garden in Regent Square.

The first morning involved agreeing the shape and extent of the plot, removing the top layer of grass and digging over in preparation for planting on the second day. A number of large roots needed removing but armed with a mattock and some heavy duty loppers we soon had their measure. We were lucky that Wendy knew someone with a property just off the Square and they allowed us to fill their green wheelie bin with our unwanted turf, roots and weeds.

On the second morning Wendy arrived with a car load of plants that had been kindly donated by U3A members, as well as some compost. Diane provided some farmyard manure and we did our best to enrich the very dry and dusty soil before filling the bed with the plants. Several people using the park stopped by to admire our work. Most thought we were from the Council. Wendy's wheelie bin buddy kindly allowed us to take water from their outside tap to enable us to water the plants in.

So far, we have planted several hostas, geraniums, a sea holly and a day lily amongst others with more contributions due from members soon. We have ordered a plaque, referencing Doncaster U3A and its work, to be placed in the centre of the plot.

Many thanks to the members that donated plants and also those who have offered monetary donations to support the development and upkeep of the garden.

Please take time to visit our plot if you are in the locality – it's only a stone's throw away from the Prego Coffee Shop for those of you who meet there for U3A events.

Peter Hermes





October - November 2019 Newsletter

WINTHROP GARDENS

The Gardening group held their August monthly meeting at Winthrop Gardens in Wickersley. We were met by Martin who is the group leader of the Rotherham U3A gardening group. He gave us a brief history of the gardens before taking us on a tour.

Winthrop is a one acre community garden developed over the last 15 years on the site of a derelict sewage works. It was founded by David Bowser as a garden offering nature therapy to everyone. Since 2016 it has been owned by Wickersley Parish Council and maintained by over 50 volunteers (including Martin). The garden was designed for peace and tranquillity with the emphasis on colour and scent. There is a bee and butterfly garden and beds of highly scented roses donated by David Austin, the well-known rose breeder. There are different styles ranging from colourful herbaceous borders to the rocky peaceful Japanese garden.

After the tour there was time to peruse the curiosity corner charity shop and some of us couldn't leave without buying books and plants!

Our visit was well rounded off by a visit to the tea rooms and a chat over coffee and cake.

Diane Woolven



SOUTHPORT FLOWER SHOW

Southport Flower Show is the largest independent flower show in the country. Renowned for its spectacular show gardens and grand floral marquee, it also features the largest amateur growers and floral art competitions. We all thought the flower arrangements were particularly good.

We were entertained by a bird of prey display in the arena followed by some dogs showing off their agility over an obstacle course.

The Food Festival had live cooking demonstrations in the cookery theatre. The day we were there Dave Myers from the Hairy Bikers was giving a demonstration. We were then inspired to check out the food stands to sample various cheeses and chutneys.

Shopping was also on offer with over 350 trade exhibitors selling everything for the home and garden. Most of us could not resist a few bulbs or plants bought at bargain prices.

The show gardens which are one of the biggest features of the Southport Flower Show were my favourite. I picked up a few tips to transform my own garden!!

Diane Woolven



Brodsworth Hall Gardens: May 2016

After our usual May meeting at the Prego coffee shop, some of the group went to Brodsworth Hall to see the gardens. Betty had kindly arranged this visit for us but at the last minute unfortunately could not go herself. Although the weather was overcast we enjoyed discovering the many different areas of the vast gardens, including the rock garden, herbaceous border and my favourite the Grotto. Many of us had cameras and when the sun made an appearance we enjoyed photographing the plants and flowers in detail. We ended the afternoon with coffee, cakes and chats, in the tearoom.

Thanks again to Betty and look forward to seeing everyone again next month.

Allen Whittaker





Botanical Gardens: April 2015

