

ALVERSTOKE CRESCENT GARDEN



**Historical Notes on framed Print sold in a
Limited edition of 200, in aid of
Friends of Crescent Garden**

Alverstoke Crescent Garden in 1830

The Crescent is as Thomas Ellis Owen designed it, with triangular pediments at each end. The Reading Room, with a Bath house on each side where warm and cold sea-water baths could be taken, is seen opposite St. Mark's Road. Research has shown the central building was higher than the wings, and gave direct access to Terrace walk.

Beyond is the shadowy outline of the other half of the Crescent, still hoped for at this time, sadly never built, but you can see what might have been....

The figure on the right is Mr. Robert Cruickshank, whose vision Angleseyville was, inspecting the work of his "most excellent Architect, Thomas Ellis Owen".

The couple walking on Terrace Walk are Captain and Mrs. Charles Austen, who live at Number Two in Crescent Road. He is the younger of Jane Austen's two sailor brothers. With him is his second wife Harriet : (his first was her sister Fanny, who sadly died in childbirth, stranded by terrible weather on his ship in Chatham where they were living at the time). The little girl with the hoop is her step- daughter and niece, Fanny.

The garden, as you can see, is very recently laid out- the Tulip Tree, now old and magnificent, newly planted in the foreground. The Yew further back is probably the only tree that was already here before building started, and the Cedar nearby is still a baby. The sea-ward view was all-important, so the ornamental shrubbery, with many evergreens, made a wind-break that was never intended to grow too high, apart from the occasional Scots Pine. These trees, with their tall naked trunks, would frame and enhance the view, rather than obscure it, and were considered the proper complement to Neo-Classical architecture.

The orientation of the garden changed irrevocably when the seaward views were cut off by a new road, and the Reading Room at its centre was demolished.

One last detail - there is a ship of the line, near the Island. Just to its right is a small Gaff Cutter. It is the "Pearl", owned and sailed from Cowes by the intrepid Marquess of Anglesey, who lent his name and support to "Angleseyville", as this new addition to Alverstoke was then known.

ALVERSTOKE CRESCENT GARDEN

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This article was included in The Crescent House Book in 2005, exclusively for Crescent Owners

ALVERSTOKE CRESCENT GARDEN

1 THE GARDEN'S HISTORY

This garden of 1.36 acres(0.6 Hectares) was part of 21-year old architect Thomas Ellis Owen's design for "Angleseyville" in 1826. He was commissioned by Robert Cruickshank, an entrepreneur who wanted to create a fashionable new resort.

Initially the project was successful at later, owing to difficulties, only half the planned building work was achieved. An early resident was Jane Austen's younger Naval brother, Captain Charles Austen, R.N.

The Ornamental Garden, whose raised Terrace Walk commanded views of the Isle of Wight, was designed to complement a fine double Crescent, but only the first half of it was built. At the Garden's centre was a small Neo-Classical building; a curved Reading Room with a Bath House on each side, where hot and cold sea-water baths could be taken. The water, supplied by a Pump House, was drawn from Haslar Creek.

Residents of Crescent Road rented keys for their use of the Garden: this paid a gardener, Henry Cooper, who lived under the Reading Room. (Census, 1841).

After W.W.I. the fixed rent of 30 shillings was not enough to meet the rise in labour costs and during W.W. II the iron railings were taken for munitions .

By 1949, the Garden had become a wilderness and Cruickshank's great grand-daughter Pauline handed over its control to the Borough Council. The Reading Room and Bath House were demolished in 1950 and for 40 years the Garden was simply maintained as an open space.

2 THE RESTORATION - ATTENTION TO DETAIL

IN 1989, Gosport Borough Council consulted Hampshire Gardens Trust's Chairman Gilly Drummond on the Gardens' future. The Trust recommended that Owen's design should be restored, and that public meetings should both inform and involve local residents.

An effective working partnership was established by the Trust between Hampshire County Council, English Heritage, Gosport's Borough Council and local people. The railings were

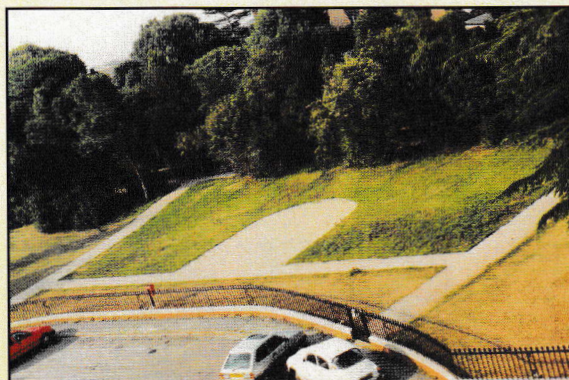


1...Garden Guardians and Friends

matched and replaced, original path structures restored and laid with Bredon gravel, as was the excavated site of the vanished Reading room and Bath Houses.

In 1991, Friends of Crescent Garden was formed by Wendy Osborne, a local artist who devised a central planting based on a design for a villa garden in the Picturesque Style by J C Loudon.(Suburban Gardener and Villa

Companion, 1836). This design approved and transferred to the site, Gosport Borough Council carried out the work of digging the beds. Partnered and supported by Gosport Borough Council, the Friends grew in number. It was agreed that the Garden's Regency character should be sustained throughout. Only plants introduced before 1850 would be used. Hazel LeRougetel was consulted by the Trust on



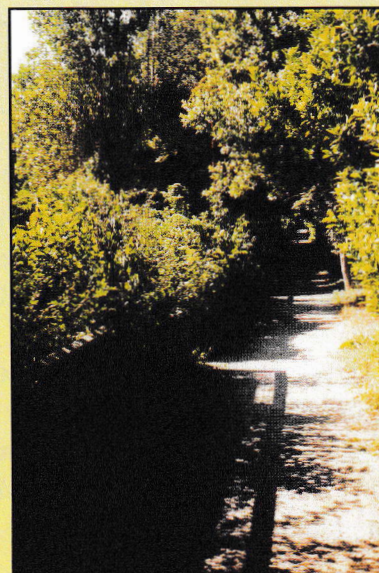
2...Central Area, Spring 1991



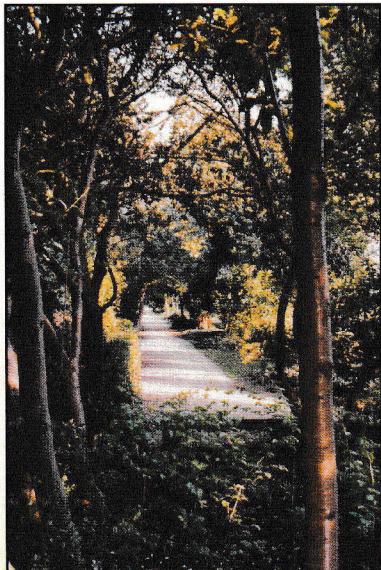
3...Central beds, Rose supports and benches

roses; those she listed were donated by the community. Mrs Mavis Batey, President of the Garden History Society, visited the Garden to advise the Friends, who began work on

the central planting at the end of 1992. This established, they extended their activities to the overgrown and tangled thicket



4...Terrace Walk in 1993



5...Terrace Walk ten years later

along Terrace Walk. Here was evidence of the largely original evergreen flowering shrub beds. Only the strongest species survived, but they showed the influence of garden writers of the Regency period and were carefully recorded. (Gilpin, Philips, Loudon). The project was featured in "Regency Gardens", Batey, Shire Publications 1995.

Over the next three years the shrub beds



6...Waiting for the Mayor



6a...The new Interpretation Board

evolved, after a major thinning of self-set and suckered trees, brambles and bushes. Designed to be viewed from all aspects, but particularly to give a series of framed vistas to strollers on Terrace Walk. Scented climbers, flowering shrubs and trees are now established, to lighten the large proportion of evergreens. This was only made possible by the Councils' installation of a water supply.

After establishing the central planting with its iron Rose supports, the Friends subscribed five carefully researched small benches along the

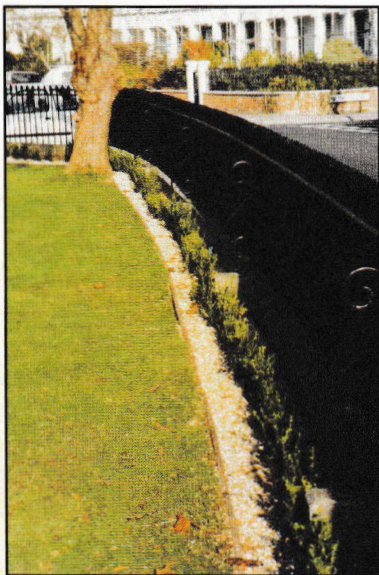
length of the Garden, and with some Council help placed them in accordance with an early map.

In 1998 Gosport Borough Council installed an Interpretation Board, designed with the help of a local Architect who drew an elevation of the demolished Reading Room. It also illustrates how the Garden probably looked in 1830 - and the badges worn by the Garden Guardians!

In 1999 two Reptonian iron flower baskets, popular features of the Regency period, were installed in the wings of the Garden. (All these items were made by a local blacksmith to researched specifications.)



7...Vista: the Reptonian Flower Basket



8...The Box Hedge, 1999

In 1999 a 200m Box hedge was planted along the railings enclosing the N. Boundary, designed to reach the height of the railing supports at about 1m in height. Langley Box, the suppliers, gave specialist advice on the planting and maintenance, which has been carefully followed.

In 1998 Crescent Garden made its first appearance in the "Yellow Book", and has been listed there ever since, with increasing numbers of visitors. The Council has placed a road sign to help them find it.

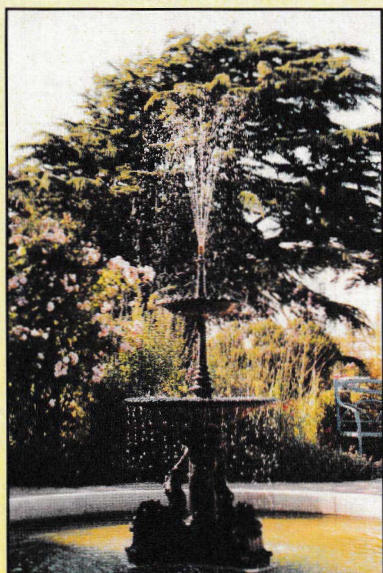
From early on there was much public consultation and debate to establish 'Exactly the Right Thing' for a central feature in

the heart of the Garden. A fountain being almost unanimously everyone's first choice, it was decided to go for it in spite of the obvious difficulties and expense, because it was felt anything else would be "second best". It took 2-and-a-half years, but with generous Grant Aid from GBC, Hampshire CC and the Hampshire Gardens Trust, an appropriate fountain was sparkling in time for the Golden Jubilee, and has given real

pleasure to everyone ever since, greatly enhancing the Garden's quality.



9...The Box hedge and railings, 2003



10...The FOUNTAIN! 2002

In 2003 a bronze plaque recording the gift of the fountain was mounted on a large stone retrieved from the original building, and sited nearby.

3 MAINTAINING THE GARDEN – A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP

The Trust's initiative left in place an effective co-operation between the community and its Local Authority. This developing and ongoing partnership has made everything possible, including the authentic Period character that makes the Garden especially enjoyable for so many visitors. The Council's Contractors, understandably wary at first of involvement of the public, have become supportive and friendly.

The Friends' 'Greenteam' has evolved a detailed maintenance plan (included), over the years while the Garden has matured. They have collected some basic tools; a battery-powered trimmer, light wheelbarrows, and several light plastic-headed rakes - an invaluable tool for both gravel and grass, especially for older volunteers.

A 'Henchman' has been acquired: a safe stable working railed platform on wheels for raised work on the Bay trees along Terrace Walk. Used with an experienced working party it has proved invaluable. For anything higher the Council's tree-surgeon is called in after consultation.

In a population of largely retirement age, most helpers are 60+: this must be borne in mind when making the Garden volunteer-friendly - and identifying tasks which are comfortably within the capability of the older gardeners. Friends and Council have appropriate Insurance cover. The exercise, fresh air, and companionship in an increasingly beautiful place have been noticeably beneficial.



11...Friends planting the Roses

When heavier work needs to be done there is a list of younger Friends willing to be enlisted for the occasional one-off project, or the Town Hall is asked for help, and invariably gives a positive response.

Brash is collected and chipped by the Council, whose recycling programme later supplies the Garden with mulch spread by the Friends in Spring. Leaves are swept and stored in 3 large

bays, used in rotation. A local stable sometimes contributes horse manure which is layered with leaf mould for excellent organic fertiliser after a years' rotting down. Raking leaves is a task which children often enjoy helping with, and many local children were involved in the first three or four years as "Garden Guardians". They helped the Friends, kept a watchful eye open for damage and litter, and enjoyed tea in the Mayor's Parlour, besides parties in the Garden, in appreciation of their efforts. They - and later generations - are aware that the Garden belongs to them as members of our community, and many have shown themselves eager to protect it.



12...Grass maintenance by GBC

Periodically the Greenteam has a "Walkabout", to enjoy successes and identify mistakes and tasks to be done. It is a priority that volunteers should do tasks they enjoy doing, and should not feel guilty if they cannot continue for a week, a season, or even a year: the Garden will still be delighted to see them back, as Greenteam or as visitors.

A good deal of propagation is carried out, with local interest in the plants used in the Garden resulting in a very successful Plant Sale in 2003: 2 more are planned in 2004. A Friend generously donated an unwanted greenhouse,

which is being used enthusiastically in a Greenteam member's garden.

Current projects include a secure metal tool-store, to be discreetly sited near the composting area to enable key-holding volunteers to work at their convenience at agreed tasks.

The Council are responsible for maintaining the grassed areas within the Garden, the Southern hedge along Terrace Walk, and the ongoing removal of brash when requested by the Friends.

The partnership between them is the enabling factor, built on four minuted Seasonal Meetings between the Friends' Committee and a representative of the Council's Leisure Services.

The key factor to the whole enterprise is goodwill between Friends and Council, their Contractors and the community, whose enjoyment of the Garden is a paramount consideration.

4 SUSTAINABILITY: ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

Gosport Borough Council and the Friends are committed to improving the local environment and helping to protect the global environment through Local Agenda 21, the global Conference where national governments pledged to work towards protecting the environment.

For several years now the use of pesticides has been abandoned in Crescent Garden in favour of environmentally sounder methods. Beer traps for slugs have proved particularly effective, dregs being solicited from the neighbouring Pub, the Anglesey Hotel.

Early on nesting boxes for birds and bats were installed; Nightingales are heard on Summer nights and Pipistrelles are glimpsed in Summer twilight.

The larvae of a thriving population of Stag Beetles are carefully protected at the compost site, where Slow worms have also been spotted.

All green waste materials, including those generated by the Council's contractors, are either processed on-site or taken to the green waste transfer station that processes all the material generated by the Council's grounds maintenance Contract.

The Garden's planting attracts many species of butterflies: one of the Greenteam is an official recorder of butterfly sightings in the area for National Conservation records.

All plants raised and propagated by the Friends are grown in peat-free compost.



13...Golden Jubilee Party

5 CRESCENT GARDEN: A PLACE FOR EVERYONE.

There is considerable local pride and enjoyment in Crescent Garden, which is walked in daily by many local residents throughout the year and is increasingly used as a venue for neighbourhood events - a great Golden Jubilee Party there set a memorable precedent. Apart from the Friends' Garden Party (272 guests in '03) and Plant Sales, it is a popular place for small children's Birthday Parties: the railings, balloon-decorated for the occasion, make it a safe place for groups

of excited small children to run about. A lightweight small marquee can always be borrowed from the Friends for a small donation to their funds.

Families sometimes like to picnic here in very hot weather on the shaded benches, before moving on to the beach at Stokes Bay, where facilities include lawn tennis courts, a putting green, paddling pool, large car park, public conveniences and catering facilities. Classes from a local school make regular term-time visits. Every other year they request a Talk on the Garden, its place in local history and other aspects, as do many other community groups. The Garden is especially rewarding for visitors



14...Families' Picnic



15... The Friends' Garden Party

in wheelchairs, the elderly and those with impaired sight, who enjoy the wonderful scents and the cool sound of splashing water, besides very young children. The comment most often heard is that it is peacefully beautiful: many come just to sit quietly. One young wife told us that her husband formally proposed to her on one of the benches, three years ago. Another bench was recently given by the Father of a 12 year old Garden Guardian when her Mother died. He wrote a brief poem to her, which is on a tiny plaque.

Young people gather on Summer evenings for a quiet can of beer. Apart from the inevitable litter, they seem to appreciate the Garden and do it no harm; many of them were "Garden Guardians" when they were younger, and it's good to see them enjoying being there again. Of course there are other less desirable elements, and a

Neighbourhood Watch has been set up nearby and contact has been established with the area's Community Police in case of a real problem. Many Brides choose to have their Wedding photographs taken in this romantic small Garden, and this year it is the chosen venue for St.Mary's Centenary Celebrations after their Church Service, in July.

A Tea-Party with games and a Treasure Hunt for the Children from Chernobyl is another annual event which gives a lot of pleasure to all concerned



16...Classes from a local School

Many of the old-fashioned plants used in Crescent Garden are recognised with delight as old friends: others are a source of interest and curiosity, and the Greenteam often find visitors' queries make a welcome break from routine tasks. Plant-sharing and gardening are pleasures shared by many from all sections of the community: sometimes those who are less drawn to the social aspect of the Friends' association come with happy enthusiasm to a Plant Sale.



17...Wedding Photographs

The Friends' subscription is virtually nominal at £2, but it is felt strongly that this Public Garden should be universally welcoming to all, whether or not they wish to join.

For this reason, a Notice Board has been ordered by the Friends and is shortly to be affixed outside the railings, near one of the central gates.

It will invite passers-by inside, and explain how the community and the Council work together for their enjoyment throughout the year.

Seasonal notes will draw their attention to what's looking good - the Tulip tree in flower, perhaps - or a forthcoming plant sale; a date for a "walkabout", or a request for help for a project. It's hoped this ongoing communication channel will encourage and foster inclusive interest and participation. Apart from this immediate contact, There have been numerous articles in magazines, local and national press (*Hampshire Life*, *Gardening Which?*, *Saga Magazine*, *The Garden*, *the News*, *Hampshire Telegraph*, *the Independent*) - besides the NGS Yellow Book and coverage on Southern TV.

This level of publicity has drawn visitors from far and wide, and a direction sign has been installed. Once there, ample on-road parking is available.



18... Children from Chernobyl

6 THE FUTURE

The Friends are now a thriving community group of well over 350. Besides the Garden Party they organise a fund-raising Coffee-morning in November, and a very jolly tea-party in February at their AGM, attended by the Mayor. They also arrange regular visits to other Gardens, which sharpen both appreciation and interest in the one they support so loyally. Looking to the future must always be speculative where gardens are concerned, with new viruses, unpredictable extremes resulting from a changing climate - and all that is entailed in any enterprise based largely on voluntary labour and input.

From the outset, the aim has been to re-create something of such real quality that it would be valued sufficiently for the community to want to keep it - an essential requisite of sustainability. Step by step, year by year, progress has been made. The support given by local people has been extraordinary, and the positive and constructive response of the Borough Council nearly 12 years ago was well ahead of its time and has been consistently enabling. The overall design now completed, these are the three main ambitions for the future:-

1..To maintain Crescent Garden to the highest possible standards in partnership with Gosport Borough Council.

2..To keep Crescent Garden in its place at the heart of the community it serves, as a welcoming, historic and refreshing amenity.

3..To concentrate on the sustainability of the enterprise. This requires the active goodwill of not only Community and Council, but particularly of volunteers, whose recruitment and management is of the utmost importance.



21... 'Something of Quality'



19...The magnificent Tulip Tree



20...Serenity

If the Garden remains Volunteer-friendly, Visitor-friendly; and Environmentally-friendly, there is every hope that it will continue to flourish.

7 THE YEAR IN THE GARDEN – THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Some tasks in the garden are year round, undertaken frequently as a matter of course, they are not onerous but make a great deal of difference to the Garden's appearance.

MAINTENANCE IN CRESCENT GARDEN - 1ST QUARTER

JANUARY

This is generally a month of rest in the Garden, but there are a few tasks.

Frost protection - Tender plants, i.e. the Melianthus, Echiums - may need covering with Horticultural fleece when there is a very cold spell.

High winds - Branches and other debris may need to be picked up, together with any litter.

Trees - Supports may need strengthening.

If there is a heavy snowfall that lasts, check weight of snow on Cypresses Cedars and evergreens; it can sometimes lead to loss of branches.

Terrace Walk Hedge is scheduled to be cut by Council Contractors this month.

The Tree Surgeon's visit during the coming weeks should be arranged or confirmed by now.

FEBRUARY

Depending on the weather conditions, the Garden now shows signs of life, particularly in a mild Winter.

WEEDS begin to appear; Bittercress takes only 6 weeks from germination to spreading seeds: one pulled out now can save 500 seedlings later, so **weeding is now a priority task when weather permits, in the second half of the month.**

Any bare rooted planting of shrubs/trees can be done now, if the weather is right.

Trees may need attention; their supports adjusted, the rings cut around them checked and mulched, any wind damage noted for the Tree Surgeon's visit.

Tree Surgery - discuss any problems, especially the ongoing measures to combat Honey Fungus. Areas around trees needing protection should be marked/ noted, and any recommendations discussed with Dave Ternent and Quadron.

Shrubs - Some can be pruned now, if they are in a sheltered position, but later in the month is advisable, **March is probably better: even early April.** Bays seem to be fine, though not just before or during a really cold snap.

Roses - The sheltered ones may be pruned in February, with an eye on weather conditions. Reduce tall ones which may be rocked by strong winds.

Perennials these may be shooting, at the base of the cut-back stems from last year.

NB It is important not to "tidy" this dead material away this month since it protects the new shoots against ground-frost. The milder the Winter, the more advanced and so the more vulnerable these shoots will be. The Central area is fairly sheltered, but is vulnerable from sharp Northerly winds: mid-March is probably the best time to cut back.

Planting out can also be done in March.

Small slugs may attack the Catmint shoots. When it's drier, we can try the beer again - perhaps we could devise lids with holes for slug entry, to minimise dilution and evaporation?

Pigeons have become a serious predator. No Spring flowers seem safe - Snowdrops and Primroses, Iris Unguicularis, Polyanthus flowers, Scillas, Crocuses - even whole plants and shooting Tulip and Lily bulbs. The problem is a serious one; we may have to abandon planting for Spring until foxes or Sparrow Hawks have reduced the Pigeon population.

The Turf. - This is the Council's responsibility, but, and especially in a mild Winter, the grass may be growing before their cutting schedules begin. Some strimming, particularly round edges and seats, may be desirable.

The circles round the trees may need some enlargement; initially we cut the turf away, but we now weed by hand where there's underplanting. Later the rings are mulched with the annual mulch of whatever compost is used.

Dog fouling - This begins to be very noticeably offensive as owners tend not to bother in Winter, particularly when the light fades early. Notices put up now, as Spring work begins, do remind Owners of their responsibilities.

Gravelled areas - Moss tends to establish in wet Winters, especially in the Central area. Weeds and grass sprout early here as well as elsewhere. Selective hoeing and light raking should be carried out. Edges should be clear; plants that are spreading over the path or have seeded too close should be moved or discarded, as the treatment will cause the whole plant to die-back.

LATE FEB/MARCH

(The Friends' AGM is this month. Once safely over, the Green Team can begin to think of the Garden year...

Shrub beds - Weeding is an early priority; hand weeding rather than hoeing, so small bulbs will not be damaged.

Encroaching **Ivy**, seeding Bays and young Brambles are much easier to deal with now than when they have had time to establish.

Climbing plants - Honeysuckles, Roses, Wisteria, Jasmine, may need securing after winter winds. **Passion Flower** can be thinned out and pruned back to main stem where overgrown, and secured. Climbing Roses can be pruned appropriately and secured, too.

Shrubs. Buddleia should be cut back to within 8-10 inches of the ground. Large shrubs like **Prunus Lusitanica** can be pruned heavily to re-shape them if this has become desirable. (several years between these drastic treatments).

Wisteria should be pruned now, as well as in August. Long leafy shoots to within 4" of main stem.

Fuchsias - because the Garden is in a mild climate, these may be treated as deciduous shrubs and shaped lightly, - or they can be cut back to almost ground level in March, or pruned not very drastically -: depending on the individual bush, its position, and whether it has suffered from frostbite.

Rue, cut back to the old wood in late March /early April.

Watch out for sap on bare hands - the same applies to the Euphorbias that have had their day

Hydrangea, remove dead heads, weak or damaged growth in **March**.

Lavenders - cut back hard in **March/April**, but not into old wood, which sprouts less readily.

Ballota - cut back growths by half in **March/April**.

Daphnes - **do not prune at all**.

Mulching of Central Area should be planned now. Originally it was thought that this would be done every other year, but on advice from every quarter it's become an annual effort. There is no doubt it has cut the weeding down tremendously, besides benefitting the soil structure and water retention. Ordered this month for late March spreading - arrange for delivery.

Weeding of Central beds is now an essential task; dead material can be tidied away as danger of bad frosts recedes. Watch out for slug activity in Catmint!

Hoses should be checked for leaks before application of mulch; also a top dressing of general fertiliser, in addition to the feeding of the Roses.

Check the depth of existing mulch - this is increasingly important as it builds up over the years. It should be 4 inches in depth, no more, to discourage weed from germinating, but the levels around trees and Roses should not be allowed to build up above this. Worm activity, weeding, and cultivation all tend to pull the mulch down or mix it into the soil, but the process isn't an even one, so the layer can be quite thick enough in some places yet need replenishment nearby. This year, 15 tonnes may be enough, (we had 20 last time) - and take into account the topping-up at each end as well. It was very useful last year, to have a heap of mulch available left in the West end.

The Box Hedge - Strim any encroaching grass off wooden strip; re-distribute shingle where scuffed off membrane.

Remove any weeds along wall at the back, and at the front.

Spring drought is a danger while the plants are young. They may need **watering**.

Now that the plants are well established, they should be **cut in mid to late Summer**.- If trimmed too early, they will make another spurt of growth which will necessitate another cut; they are still growing to the required height and shape. Probably a good time for trimming is shortly before the Garden Party in June.

Roses - Prune from mid-February to end of March. **Feed** after pruning.

Any new planting - may need watering, in drying Spring winds. Advisable to wait, where feasible, until the soil has begun to warm up a bit: avoid wet conditions.

MAINTENANCE IN CRESCENT GARDEN - 2ND QUARTER

APRIL

Perennials can be tidied, not too drastically until towards the end of the month, but the Garden should be taking on a Spring time look, with Forget-me-nots and Tulips and gold-laced Polyanthus. **Wind chill is still a hazard**, though, for tenderer things - the Echiums and the Melianthus, for example.

Cold winds can be very drying, and over 10 days with no rain may make **watering** advisable for any recent plantings, particularly shrubs and saplings.

Weeding is still a priority, especially if a mulch is to be/has been applied. The soil should be made as weed-free as possible before mulching.

Before the Mulch is spread: Besides getting rid of weeds, there are two main tasks.

1... Feeding - specifically the Roses, and generally of all the beds to be mulched. Rose Feed should be given at least 2/3 weeks before mulching, so it has begun to dissolve and be absorbed before the mulching. General fertiliser, too, should go on a fortnight earlier. Both to be lightly forked in, care being taken not to damage Rose roots, bulbs - or the Hoses! A long handled weeding fork is good for this.

It's important that the ground should be thoroughly damp, so after heavy rain is an ideal time.

Mulching

The object is to suppress annual weeds in the soil, retain moisture, and to add organic matter. The mulch should be about 4" deep to achieve this. Perennial weeds should be dug out beforehand, but of course some will remain. When tackling them later, clear the mulch, lift them with a fork, and re-spread the mulch.

Organic mulch provides excellent nourishment for annual weed seeds that alight on it, so they must be winkled out promptly, before they flower and seed.

N.B. **A hoe should not be used for this job**, as it drags weeds and mulch about, and can damage roots of Roses and shrubs. Hand weeding with a hand-weeding fork gets the whole weed out much more effectively, but take care to identify where the hose is, and avoid punctures!

We have tried all-purpose compost (v expensive but conveniently bagged), and Green Leaf Waste, ordered through GBC from Surrey Loams. Much cheaper, especially in large quantity; 10 tons was £165 delivered. This year - 1999 - the Friends spread 10 tons initially, in less than 4 hours, with about 14 people and 5 barrows. Later, a further 5 tons were spread equally rapidly around the trunks of the W end trees, particularly the Tulip Tree.

This year, Surrey Loams recommended Rose food generally, as being a good supplement to the green leaf waste we were using.

Supports

The Lattice supports made of Hazel prunings are very effective, and good over most perennial clumps that grow tall enough to blow over. 3/4 branches, stuck firmly well in around the clump, bent in green stick fractures and secured where the branches cross each other, make a suprisingly firm framework. As the plant grows up through it, the support is hidden; stems and lattice give each other mutual support.

Supports for Trees need checking regularly. Large canes will be needed later for Hollyhocks and Dahlias and the Heleniums, the tall, daisy-like flowers that bloom in later Summer in Autumn colours.

MAY

Planting out perennials and annuals.

CAUTION is needed; warm Spring days can tempt too-early planting out. Once the second week's over, it should be safe.

Annuals usually used include:

Stocks, frilled double Petunias, Snapdragons (Anthrirrhinums), Love-Lies-Bleeding (Amaranthus), Bells of Ireland.

Heliotrope and Salvia Patens have been mostly bought in as annuals in the past, but we have found S Patens easy to over-Winter, and cuttings taken as they sprout in Spring root readily. The Heliotrope was harder to preserve, but two survived. The Friends have been paying £4.50 per plant for these two varieties, so there is an appreciable saving on an average buy of at least 6 of each.(£27).

Seeds of Amaranthus and Bells of Ireland are grown by ourselves and planted out as soon as they are sizeable. Stocks, Snapdragons and Petunias are bought by the Friends each year.

Planting..Ideally done when the soil is rainy -damp and rain is due!

Plants should go in in groups of uneven numbers - threes, fives, and occasionally sevens - and the colours should not be mixed up, but be in solid drifts. Where a particularly successful combination has been noted, it's worth referring to this before going ahead, or there will inevitably be some winking out to achieve it again. Example: the tall growing Love-Lies-Bleeding looks very well round the leggy Rose "Quatre Saisons" half way back on the left of centre. This year a Dahlia, "Bishop of Llandaff" is being tried in the middle of the Roses as well. "Salvia Patens" and Heliotrope are later flowering than most of the purchased annuals, so their placing is important as they provide late colour. Bells of Ireland give a fresh green note in Summer, and are very beautiful when Autumn frosts reduce them to a pale straw skeleton. This shows up best against a darker background, like the evergreen Myrtle.

A measure of slow release fertiliser is good, and plants should be watered before leaving their pots or trays, and after going in. Using a trowel, the mulch should be scraped aside, and the hole should be made in the earth underneath it. When the plant is in, the mulch is pulled back round it, leaving a saucer shaped indentation which will hold the water. This is especially desirable when the weeping hose is some distance away, otherwise the water tends to run off

the mulch.

Perennial Weeds. These are a constant enemy; **Bindweed, Buttercup, Speedwell (Veronica) and Couch Grass.**

Couch grass grows into the beds from the surrounding turf. Trimming the edges is not enough to stop this; a spade should be driven down along the edges every 4 weeks or so, to sever invading roots. Any Couch grass knitting-in to edging plants, like the Pinks, should be worked out carefully with a little fork, with as little disturbance as possible to the resident plant. If there's a bad infestation, the plant may have to be lifted, to get rid of the Couch Grass from around the roots.

Bind weed. This should be pulled out whenever seen throughout Spring and early Summer. This will weaken it.

Buttercup Part the mulch, (watch out for the hose), and dig it out with a little fork. The same goes for **Bittercress, Dandelion** and **Willowherb**. Bittercress, the weed with small white flowers, takes only 6 weeks from seed to seeding; its pods explode, spreading hundreds of seeds at a burst over a large area, so it's worth catching it young!

The **Box** planting is an area where light weeding regularly done will be sufficient to keep it weed-free.

The **Central gravel areas** need ongoing applications of glyphosate contact weed killer. This is applied not with a spray, but with the red watering can and a dribble bar, care being taken to avoid spillage on the grass or on plants in the beds.

(For several years we hand-weeded the gravel, but it was not only hugely labour intensive, but also damaged the surface, bringing earth upwards with the roots, and led to more and more weeds seeding and spreading. When the paths were restored and rolled hard with fresh gravel, the weed killer *very carefully applied* proved to be a much better bet.) Recently, we have cut down on the glyphosate, finding that the right kind of hoe, used at a skimming angle, prevents the weeds from getting too well rooted.

Later in May, there is a great surge of growth in the **Ivy**, and around the **Bay trees**. Young shoots of Bay are sappy and can be strimmed/sheared off low down before they harden, but small seedlings should be pulled out - easier after rain.

Small Brambles begin to show in the Ivied areas, and should be dug out - after rain is easiest again. **Brambles, Bays and Ivy too far up the trees** are an ongoing project from now on until the end of the year; a regular foray every month will keep them in check, but neglect will make it much harder and spoil the look of the Garden very quickly.

Ivy. Successful management of this plant is based on its undoubted value as an evergreen groundcover and its self-limiting quality as a ground plant. After covering the ground to a height of about 30cms, light exclusion from the leaves not only prevents the germination of weed seeds, but also any growth of shoots from the bottom layers of the plant.

Unless there is a tree-trunk to climb, it forms a low dense cushion, whose height will automatically remain constant: outward spread can be regularly contained by a trim with long-handled shears through the outward growing shoots in the growing season. Once the shape is

established, about 3 times annually.

On no account should the stems be torn up because this will let light into the ground and trigger dormant weed seeds into growth. It is difficult to pull out weeds in an established Ivy bed without disturbing the light exclusion and increasing the problem.

A light patterning up a tree-trunk is appropriate in this context - once over 2 metres, it is a simple matter to clip through the ascending stems at ground level and strip them off the bark.

A special cultivation note for volunteers:-

A natural look is the aim; this is not a rigorously formal Garden like later regimented Victorian Parks where a leaf out of place was a blot on the unnaturally impeccable landscape.

The Regency flavour was more exuberantly informal. Leafy scenes, drifts of one colour into another, flowing curves and trailing scented flowery climbers growing in the manner of glades in New Forest landscapes were the gardeners' delight before the young Queen Victoria came to the throne, and Prince Albert made such a virtue of order. A Regency garden flowed into the surrounding countryside seeming part of nature itself.

It is important, when working in Crescent Garden, to bear this in mind, because it influences the way many of the tasks are carried out. A knife-like edge to the shrubbery beds is not as good as one which is gently blurred by slightly overhanging leaves; the grass should run in under shrubs rather than the shrubs being cut back and contained inside a clearly defined bed. Pruning and shaping everywhere should aim at a natural effect, and so should the way plants are placed and supported.

Perennials that spread invasively - the Japanese Anemones, for example, the double-flowered strawberry plants and the creeping Alchemilla in the front west corner of the centre beds.

Spreading suckers should be weeded out, to keep the clumps in their desired shapes and prevent them invading other plants, as part of routine weeding. Clumps of Primulas can be divided and re-planted; (so can other clumps, but not now).

Stalks with dead heads of Tulips that are to remain in the soil should be carefully cut so as to leave no flower debris lying about: the leaves should be kept flourishing until they yellow and die back when they too can be lifted away.

JUNE.

Watering is becoming a more frequent task as weather warms up and the new small plants need care. The Box planting needs an occasional long soak, but Box is fairly drought tolerant and the membrane round it retains moisture well.

Dead-Heading is beginning to be necessary, especially with the Roses, whose flowering period can be extended by weeks.

Greenfly are also starting to appear, and some draping of detergent froth will help to stop an explosion. Spraying has not been much more effective in the past and was abandoned for ecological reasons in the early 90's. Since David Tinling has been systematically removing diseased foliage with dead flowers, the health of the Roses has improved greatly.

The soapy treatment is a matter of some urgency at the first sign of the greenfly, as they multiply so quickly.

Weeding is a constant task, but one which should be lightened after a deep mulching earlier on.

Hollies tend to have a considerable leaf-fall this month which needs raking up.

The Box Hedge

This is clipped once a year, in time for the Friends' Garden Party on the 3rd Saturday in June. It takes several days, and is a considerable task, though it is perhaps easier now the hedge is solidly established and taking on its designed shape. Box does not respond well to power tools, and is best clipped in the traditional manner, with very sharp shears. When it has uniformly reached the desired height (just below the S shaped railing supports) a template might be useful: until then, compromise and an "Eye-Sweet" result is the best that can be achieved, given the unequal growth along its 200+m length. A small number of volunteers generally take this job on, working on assigned lengths at their own pace, with frequent consultations (and cups of coffee!)

The Friends' Garden Party is a great motivation for the Green Team; the Garden generally reaches its June peak around that time. After it is over, the Team tends to take a well-earned break and simply enjoy the results of their hard work for a week or two, until the radical changes of July.

MAINTENANCE IN CRESCENT GARDEN - 3RD QUARTER.

JULY

There is a major shift in the Garden's appearance as the first part of the Summer draws to an end, and the Roses which do not repeat finish their flowering season.

Tender Annuals now begin to assert themselves, and later flowering perennials and shrubs will establish a new colour scheme entirely: one which should keep the Garden full of interest until the Autumn leaves are falling in early November.

Removal of faded heads of early perennials - *Verbascum Chaixii*, Foxgloves, Maddonna Lilies, *Dicentra*, etc. - sometimes prompts a second flowering on some.

The central area: Catmint. This lines the central area and its first flush of flowers, when fading, should be lightly clipped, to encourage a second. Done with regard to the shape of the clumps, this should not give a uniform "chopped" look, but it does enable a clean -up sweep of the underlying gravel.

Gaps. Inevitably, after the Tulips, Aquilegias, Love-in-a-Mist, Polyanthus, etc. have disappeared, there will be gaps. We have now built up a reserve of pot-contained plants that can be used to fill these: Dahlias, Fuchsias, scented Geraniums - sometimes small shrubs from 2nd -year cuttings - can be sited to advantage, especially where a clump of Dahlias has been slowed by slug attack, or where a large uncontrolled dog has left casualties.

Edges round central area - Especially under Pinks. These should be re-cut with half-moon

cutter to sever any encroaching Couch-grass, which would rapidly invade the plants.

Tree supports Periodic checks during the year on young trees: they very quickly get too tight and damage the growing trunk.

Fruit (*For two years the Black Mulberry, planted in 1994 for 50th Anniversary of Gosport's contribution to the Mulberry Harbours, has borne an appreciable harvest, much enjoyed by a growing no of visitors.*)

Picking of ripe fruit - blackish-red -begins later this month, to be frozen and accumulated for **Mulberry Jelly** sold at fund-raising event. Ripening continues until mid-August.

Tidying -up of shrub beds: pruning of shrubs and climbers that flowered in Spring and early Summer - Wisteria, Ribes (Flowering Currant), Viburnum Opulus, Kerria, etc. Hardy Geraniums along shrubbery beds can benefit from being trimmed back off the grass and avoid too much die-back of the turf, losing the shape of the bed.

The Woodland Area at the East end is essentially a Spring garden, with Bluebells, Foxgloves, Violets, Primroses and Hellebores planted under a small copse of Hazels, planted fairly close to provide supports for perennials (See Part 1) when they are routinely coppiced in late Winter. No attempt is made for this area to provide other than green shade later than June: the brash is stowed here as neatly as possible behind a large evergreen Euonymus. Bays and Hawthorn are carefully shaped here and reduced as necessary during dormant months. Watering is kept to a minimum for survival; litter routinely removed; otherwise this non-labour-intensive area is off the tasking list until very early Spring.

Collection of seeds and cuttings begins the increasing propagation programme. *Last year (2003) there was a popular and very successful Plant sale. Two sales are planned for 2004.* Cuttings of Pinks and Catmint, Geraniums, Cistus and Myrtle: seeds of Love-in-a-Mist, Larkspur Hesperis Matronalis and Sweet William are harvested now. Seeds of many other plants, including tender Annuals, will be collected from now until early Winter for sowing in February/March.

AUGUST

This month can be a challenge for the planting scheme, which without careful planning can look jaded and tired. But Hollyhocks, Zinnias, Lythrium, Dahlias, Japanese Anemones, Aster Diviricatus, Bells of Ireland, Amaranthus Caudatus, Nicandra Physalodes, Heliotrope, Morning Glory, "Marvel of Peru", Californian Poppy, Verbena Bonariensis, and late Roses should be supplying plenty of colour and interest.

Tending them as they grow to maturity is light and pleasant work, with small secateurs, a light plastic rake and perhaps some twine for obstinate floppers. Most of the Hazel cuttings were used to make supporting structures for perennials like Campanulas to grow through, but some should have been reserved for supporting larger late annuals. Amaranthus Caudatus and Nicandra Physalodes combine well together; the crimson tassels of the Amaranthus trailing through the tough lacquer-black branching stems of the Nicandra, which now bears green and black lantern seed-pods.

Mulberry gathering continues.

Trim/shape after flowering Lavender, Sage, Santolina, Convulvulus Cneorum - these Mediterranean plants can come into their own now; even without flowers their silvery foliage is another pleasing colour, as is the fresh crisp green of scented Geranium, which scrambles and climbs to fill many otherwise empty spaces right up into November..

Watering may be necessary.

Dead-heading of bedding plants, ie Petunias, Anthirrhinums, Dahlias.

Supporting of growing annuals, ie Amaranthus (Love Lies Bleeding).

SEPTEMBER

Tends to be less active: there is a relaxed, Indian Summer feel as Autumn approaches.

Leaf -raking begins sometime this month. Leaves are composted to make leaf-mould; when possible, last year's leaves are layered with horse manure and heat up to make excellent compost for the following year.

Dead-heading keeps the Garden looking good, but there is now a feeling of sprawling Autumn abundance as October approaches and leaves change colour. Plants grow into each other, and any attempt at separation to impose order can result in a straggling collapse. Gentle tweaking is the order of the day, while Nature runs riot in a last burst of colour which can be the most spectacular time of the year.

Weeding now can prevent millions of weed seeds sowing for next Spring, so where possible this should continue as always.

The grass continues to grow, thicker than ever. A good time for seeding bare patches: edge-strimming still a weekly task.

NB. Dead or dying plants should be very carefully watched and examined for signs of Honey Fungus, which is known to be present in the Garden. Suspect deaths should always have a post-mortem - ie a check for stringy black Rhizpomorphs and the silvery invasion of mycelium along the insides of the bark when peeled off.

MAINTENANCE IN CRESCENT GARDEN - 4TH QUARTER

OCTOBER

Leaf raking is becoming a major task. Three bins are used in rotation for successive years' leaves. (Care must be taken when digging them out as Stag Beetle Larvae and Slow Worms find the shelter and warmth of these leaf storages inviting. If disturbed they should be carefully resited into a newer heap, or they and their vicinity should be left undisturbed until larvae have had time to develop.)

Planting Bulbs, if any, should be done as late as possible: Tulips can if necessary wait until early November. When planting, a certain amount of clearing may be necessary, and sometimes nearby clumps of perennials need to be divided and re-planted, so the whole exercise becomes part of the general project of clearing the Garden for Winter. Watch should be kept for signs of Honey Fungus fruits; apricot fungi in tiered clumps, following the line of an invaded root. There is a collar round the upper stem, rather like a Mushroom has. If HF is identified, the root should be dug out as comprehensively as possible, when rhizomorphs and mycelium may confirm the diagnosis.

Clearing for Winter This is a major task, involving the lifting of any plant material which is to be kept frost-free - ie Scented Geraniums, Chocolate Cosmos, Salvia Patens, Dahlias. Apart from the Geraniums, most of these will survive an average Winter's frosts, but potting a number up is a good insurance - it also means that options are open when they are re-sited next year. Weeds and dead leaves are cleared, and the soil lightly forked where it is vacant.

Roses Climbers can be pruned now, and any unevenly tall new growth that may subject the plant to wind-rock reduced, to lessen the strain - probably a foot or so will be enough, depending on how exposed its situation.

Tall perennial plants can be decorative in Winter, provide some shelter from wind, and deter dogs and children from running over suddenly cleared and flattened areas. Lythrium is particularly good, turning a reddish tan colour that looks interesting in a wintry landscape. The Catmint round the central area dislikes too much wet and cold; it is best to leave some of the dried dead growth on to protect it from sharp frosts.

The Echium(s) are tender if it gets very cold, though will stand some frost. For some years we have managed to shelter one or two plants with a wooden frame with a double layer of horticultural fleece. In frosty weather the top is covered over; when mild the top cover is drawn back. Other self-seeded Echiums might get fleece thrown over, as does the Lobelia Tupa, but one or two survivors in all will be very rewarding and ensure seedlings after flowering early next Summer. (One year one Echium had no fewer than 12 spires, most of them over 10 feet high, well worth the effort of protection).

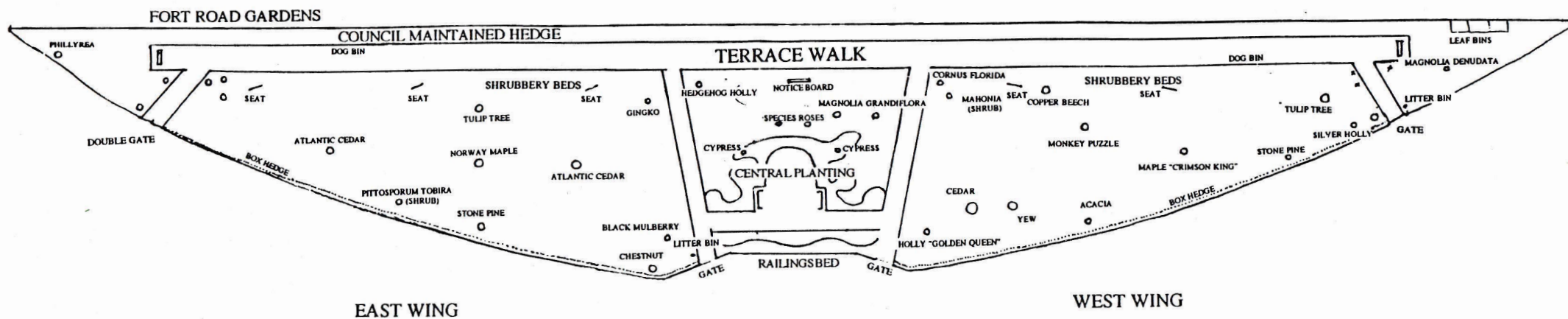
The Melianthus by the E central gate generally dies back with any prolonged frost and is too large to cover successfully. The roots are sheltered with fleece or straw with a leafmould mulch, and shoot up again in Spring, like a Fuchsia will.

NOVEMBER

Clearing continues: the last of the leaves tend to get mixed up with firework debris. Arrangements should be made for Winter tree work, and any problem areas which involve trees or turf discussed at the last Seasonal Meeting of the year.

DECEMBER

Christmas takes precedence over gardening; but many people enjoy walking through during the Holiday and the gravel may need a quick rake over. A litter run after New Years' Eve celebrations is a good idea - and the seed Catalogues are inviting!



ALVERSTOAKE CRESCENT GARDEN 2000

FRIENDS OF CRESCENT GARDEN

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The name of the association shall be the Friends of Crescent Garden ("the Friends").

2. AIMS AND OBJECTS

The aim of the Friends is to cultivate, evolve and improve Alverstoke Crescent Garden in Hampshire ("the Garden") in the manner of the Regency Period through the activities of the Friends whose objects are:

- a) Promote the community's interest and pleasure in the Garden as a historic, beautiful, social and educational asset to the Borough of Gosport.
- b) Work with, encourage, support and co-ordinate with Gosport Borough Council ("the Council") as Owner of the Garden in support of the aim.
- c) Encourage and promote the association of the Friends.
- d) Carry out works by volunteers or through paid Contractors and pay for services, plants, materials and other things.
- e) Form and foster collaborative and enabling contacts with relevant organisations in order to achieve this end, appointing representatives to them where expedient.
- f) Undertake research into the Garden and the local history of the Angleseyville area.
- g) Publish and otherwise disseminate information.
- h) Provide educational and social events for the Friends and others.
- i) Raise funds and otherwise assist in support of the objects.

3. LIMITATIONS.

All activities in relation to the Garden carried out by the Friends to be subject to the consent of the Council as the Owner of the Garden.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- a) Membership is open to any individual having an interest in the Garden.
- b) The privileges of membership include:
 - i. Attending and voting at meetings of the Friends.
 - ii Attending social and educational functions of the Friends.
 - iii Receiving Newsletters and other material.
 - iv The privileges of membership may only be exercised if a member has paid the current year's subscription.
- c) Membership shall cease if the subscription is more than 12 months in arrears.

5. MEETINGS.

- a) An Annual General Meeting shall be held in or about February of each year to receive the Committee's report and accounts and to elect Officers and members of the Committee.
- b) The Committee shall determine the time and place of the meeting giving members at least two week's notice.
- c) A General Meeting of members shall be called at the written request of twenty-five or more members to be held within one month of the request. The request shall state the purpose for which the meeting is to be called. The time and place of the hearing of the meeting shall be determined by the Committee who shall give members at least two weeks' notice.

6. OFFICERS.

The Officers of the Friends shall be a Chairman, Hon. Secretary, and Hon. Treasurer who shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. Nominations for the election of Officers shall be made in writing and signed by a proposer and seconder and contain the consent of the nominee. Nominations shall be delivered to the Hon Secretary not later than noon two days before the Annual General Meeting.

7. COMMITTEE.

- a) The Committee shall be responsible for the management and administration of the Friends.
- b) It shall comprise the Officers and up to nine members elected at the Annual General Meeting. Nominations shall be made in the same manner as for the election of Officers (except that nominations may be delivered to the Meeting).
- c) The Chairman shall chair meetings and in his absence the Committee shall elect a Chairman.
- d) It shall hold four meetings a year at which an officer of the Council shall be invited to attend and represent the interests of the Council.
- e) It may hold such other meetings as it decides.
- f) Four members shall form a quorum.
- g) Each question shall be determined by the majority of a vote. In the event of equality the Chairman shall have an additional and casting vote.
- h) It shall have the power to co-opt further members and to fill any casual vacancy.
- i) It may appoint Sub- Committees.
- j) It shall set the Annual Subscription payable by members to cover the estimated administrative costs of the Friends.

8. FUNDS.

- a) The Committee shall pay out of the funds of the Friends all proper expenses of the Friends and funds for the furtherance of the aims.

- b) The money of the Friends shall be paid into such account(s) as the Committee shall decide from time to time and shall be withdrawn on the authority of two of the following officers: the Chairman, the Hon. Secretary, and Hon. Treasurer.
- c) A profit and loss account and a balance sheet to 31st December shall be drawn each year. The Accounts shall be audited by an auditor elected at the Annual General Meeting in the same manner as for Committee members.
- d) If the Friends are dissolved, any surplus funds should be given to the Council for expenditure on the Garden or if not accepted by the Council on such terms to one or more institutions having similar objects to those of the Friends and approved by a meeting of the Friends.

9. NOTICES.

- a) Any notice required to be given by this constitution shall be deemed to have been duly given if left or sent by pre-paid post to the address last notified by the member to the Committee.
- b) Any accidental omission to give notice or the non-receipt of notice by any member shall not invalidate any meeting, resolution or purpose set out in the notice.

10. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION.

Amendments may be made by a majority of not less than two-thirds of those members attending an Annual General Meeting or a General Meeting called for such a purpose.

11. DATA PROTECTION ACT.

By joining the Friends members will be deemed to consent to the holding of relevant personal data by the Friends.

Draft by John Donnelly vl. 14 January 2002

FRIENDS OF CRESCENT GARDEN

Income and Expenditure Accounts

Year Ending 31 December 2003

INCOME	2003	2002
Subscriptions	296.00	287.00
Donations	474.00	597.00
AGM	288.00	367.90
Spring Outing - Bowood	1605.55	1432.00
Garden Party	2467.60	2297.55
Highgrove		495.80
Autumn Outing - Pol. Lacey	598.00	1214.60
Coffee Morning	507.60	509.38
Bank Interest	50.04	7.82
Sale of Cards	97.10	121.75
Sale of Pictures	450.00	75.00
Plant Sales	260.05	18.00
Tent Hire	30.00	100.00
Total Income	7123.94	7523.80

EXPENDITURE

Events		Surplus		Surplus
AGM	83.83	204.17	46.66	321.24
Spring Outing - Bowood	1366.95	238.60	1267.83	164.17
Garden Party	914.85	1552.75	782.38	1515.17
Highgrove			491.75	4.05
Autumn Outing - Pol. Lacey	546.70	51.30	1019.21	195.39
Coffee Morning	4.47	503.13	19.70	489.68
Admin and Misc				
Hampshire Garden Trust	10.00		10.00	
Nat. Garden Yellow Book	190.00		118.00	
Printing, Stationery etc	177.57		132.79	
Tent Purchase			314.38	
Picture Frames	176.24		29.37	
Insurance	41.00		49.00	
Printing of Cards			248.00	
Donations/Gifts	95.97		24.98	
Garden				
Gardener	151.00		241.00	
Plants	288.41		307.28	
Equipment, Mulch etc	477.99		401.56	
Fountain	813.36		152.80	
Total Expenditure	5338.34		5656.69	
Surplus/(Deficit)	1785.60		1867.11	

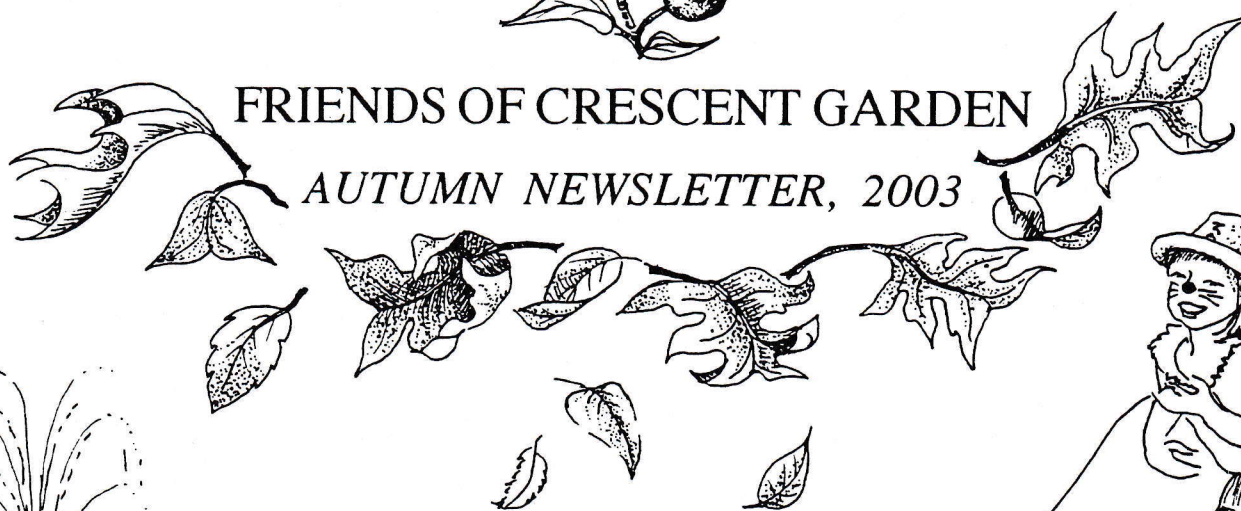
Brought Forward from 20021 3714.50
 Total Carried Forward to 2004 5500.10
 Administrative Costs as a percentage of expenditure = 4.0%

Fountain Fund

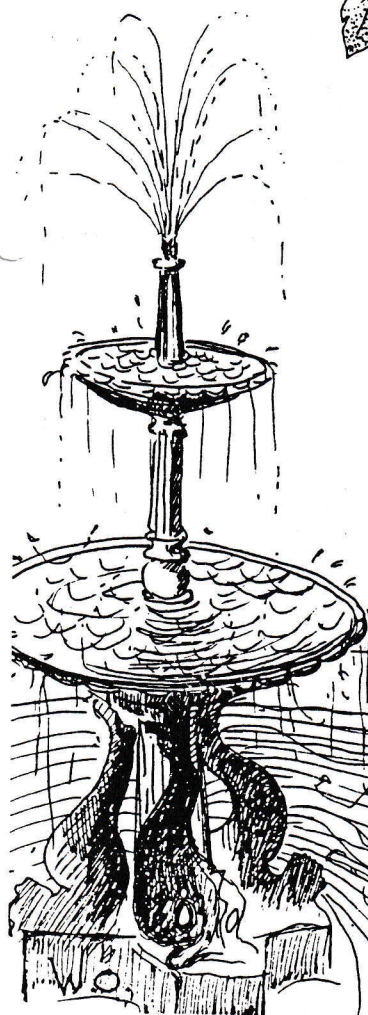
Brought Forward from 2002	1500.00
Stone Plaque	572.00
Carried Forward to 2004	928.00

Presented by: D. R. WARDLE
 Hon. Treasurer

Audited by: I. Gallett
 17.01.04



FRIENDS OF CRESCENT GARDEN
AUTUMN NEWSLETTER, 2003



First things first!

THE COFFEE MORNING

**Looking forward to seeing you!!!
21st November, 10-30 at 30 Western Way,
at the kind invitation of Don and Betty Cripps.
The Friends' great start to the Festive Season!!
Coffee and Biscuits: Entry £1.**

As usual, we'll be truly grateful for Raffle prizes, Bric-a -Brac, Bottles and Produce, to make up the Friends' traditional **Splendid Array** .

RAFFLE PRIZES - go to Rita Rundle, at 12 Crescent Rd.

PRODUCE - if not brought on the day, goes to Jill Parry, at 20 Crescent Rd.

BOTTLES - To David Wardle, 2 St. Mary's Avenue.

BRIC-A-BRAC, please, to Jill Streatfield -James at Rosery Cottage, The Lane, or to 21 Crescent Rd. (You could leave them safely in the porch.)

This Newsletter is the **LAST REMINDER** - please don't miss it!

We hoped for coloured photographs on the cover, but ours aren't digital, so wouldn't transfer well. But the drawings, clockwise from top left, give some idea of them.

The Tulips Our 3,000 bulbs just showed before the Spring Newsletter. Very exciting, the red and yellow flowers were magnificent - but then 1,000 'Couleur de Cardinal' weren't like a crimson robe at all, but a modern pallid shade of pink.

The News boards proclaimed "Shocking Pink Bloomers In Gosport!" (a bit of light relief from Iraq). The Dutch suppliers said they were *desolated*; and would replace the bloomers this Autumn. All we had to do was to enjoy the wrong ones - then lift them - and plant 1,000 Cardinals this month. Watch this space!

The excited small boy is from Chernobyl, one of twelve who spent a month with kind Gosport families. They came to a party in the Garden given by some Friends. A great time was had by all - especially the hosts. They all sang and danced for us, and threw themselves into the games and races with an enthusiasm delightful to see. The tea went down pretty well, too, and they loved the Treasure Hunt. Their health is wonderfully improved by just a month here; it made us reflect how fortunate we are.

The Plant Sale was a new venture this year. Some Friends kindly added spare plants from their gardens, and several keen local gardeners actually discovered the Garden through this event, and loved it. A very cheerful, encouraging morning; at £1 per plant we made £260! . Such a success; we're planning two in 2004, on the May Bank Holiday, and in July: Thanks to the Mackay's very generous gift of a greenhouse, all kinds of interesting things are planned: we're so grateful to them.

The Pussy-cat with a balloon was a guest at one of several small childrens' Birthday Parties in the Garden this lovely Summer. Organised by parents, but the Friends' are very happy to put up a tea-tent for a donation; it's a joy to see the Garden used this way.

The two little boys came with their mothers one sunny morning when I was raking the gravel by the pool. I told them they'd just missed a big frog, swimming round frantically, that we'd fished out with some difficulty. One little boy rushed to look at the water, the other looked blank, until his mother bent and rapidly flashed her fingers, when his face lit up, and he smiled.

"I'm sorry, I didn't realise he had a problem", I said. We chatted for a while; she told me they had all come from Fareham, because the Garden was such a safe place for them to run about as her son couldn't hear her call if he was out of sight. She could relax here. I said "It must be difficult for you both".

"We're fine" she smiled. "Can you think of anything better than to come to a garden like this, on a day like today, to have a picnic with your very best friend?"

We watched them running across the grass to the blue bench. It seemed that no England in Bloom judge could ever say anything as encouraging as that.

The lady in the wheelchair came to the Garden Party, along with 271 others - a record.

The Friends' new fountain Plaque was in place; everyone seemed very pleased with it. The sun shone, the tents looked trim and festive, and the Pimms flowed. The Raffle was wonderfully supported, and lots of guests bought plants.

Several Friends said afterwards they thought it was the best Garden Party ever, and we made £1500, another record. The Committee and the Garden Party team were exhausted but delighted!

Thoughtful, too; success brings problems of its own. The number of Friends has grown steadily, and the Garden Party has grown with it. Once, we debated whether to try to limit both, but decided that would be against all the Community spirit of the Garden. Not very sensible either, to appear exclusive, if you want everyone to wish it well. Limiting Party numbers on logistic grounds has been tried - a "First come, first served" principle is fair enough - but it's an uneasy compromise, we hate turning Friends away. As your Committee we feel we owe it to the Friends to explore ways of accommodating as many of them as possible.

We've already needed outside help with service. With the possibility next year of 300 ticket applications from a membership of 350 Friends (a modest percentage) we would certainly need more help with the food, for which responsibility has fallen increasingly heavily onto a small team.

Either we must ask if more Friends could contribute more small eats, on a carefully planned and integrated basis, or we should consider the possibilities of a professional

catering input. But how much input? We don't want to lose the generous involvement of the faithful Friends who have yearly brought such delicious contributions and by doing so have made it such a warm and neighbourly affair. Nor do we want such a huge jump in ticket prices that only a few can afford to come! Small eats are labour intensive and correspondingly expensive, as tentative enquiries have shown. And it is our major fund-raising event of the year.

We need to know how you feel about it. It would be a big help if you could return the cut-off strip - to me or any of the Committee, before Christmas cards take over! - and let us know. Then we can have some informed proposals for the AGM.

Dates for your new 2004 Diary -

The AGM: February 21st. The Plant Sale May 30th The Garden Party, 19th 21st June.

The Pomegranates over the title are tangible reminders of the changing climate - there's an unprecedented crop of fruit on our Pomegranate tree, just as there was on our Mulberry (though there won't be Pomegranate conserve at the Coffee Morning!). Both flourished in the long hot Summer, like so many of the Mediterranean plants.

Time may reveal casualties from the long drought however: several Roses look dead. An article in a London paper describes how Park Directors are anticipating casualties and rethinking planting plans. At Hillier's Arboretum two Cedars have dried out and split. We too found the earth bone dry and impacted below 3', when we tried to plant the black-stemmed Bamboo. We filled the hole, but the water took days to drain away. Even deep roots must have been parched.

Incidentally, the Bamboo's non-invasive spread is about 6ft, height 12ft. Evergreen; light and pretty in Winter, it was introduced from China just before the Crescent was built in 1825; it moves and sounds most attractively in the wind.

We were sad to say goodbye to Dennis and Hilary Thain, who did so much for the Garden during their years here, and who have returned to Dennis' native Edinburgh. Hils especially has left a big gap; a briskly effective Committee member, she was a knowledgeable and experienced gardener who thoroughly enjoyed the work she did for the Friends. She made the Box hedge her special project - one year she clipped the entire 230m herself (with precision: she was a trained hairdresser). They promise to return for the Garden Party, so the Box had better look good! We wish them joy in their new home and hope the Green Team will be joined by others who find it as much fun as Hils did. A big welcome awaits!!

Meanwhile, Rita Rundle has very kindly offered her services to the Committee and we have been happy to see her at recent meetings.

We live in curious times: somebody went to a lot of trouble to steal our yellow NGS collection box, padlocked to the railings with a hefty chain: it contained about 20p. A Friend who's since died made it, so it was a sad as well as pointless theft.

Then Andy James came to the rescue, making a replacement a project for apprentice welders at HMS Sultan which should be smartly in place next Spring. We are very grateful indeed to the kind makers, as well as to Andy, who has been steadily working at painting all the benches in the Garden. Thank you!

Another sign of the times has been the late Summer evening socialising, loads of beer cans the morning after - but no damage to the Garden. Young people quietly enjoying a few beers are fine (though it'd be lovely if they used the bin!); drug dealing and usage are entirely different. But wintry nights should shelve the problems for a while.

The **Spring Newsletter** ended with a list of ambitions for the year:-

'A beautiful Community Garden. A great Garden Party. A Tool storage. A really good party for the Chernobyl children. The green and black Bamboo - and perhaps some Crescent Mulberry conserve?'

Thanks to the efforts, hard work, and generosity of so many Friends, we've achieved nearly all these things, with flying colours. We're still working on the tool stowage, and we hope soon to have a small Friends' Notice Board, to highlight points of special interest and to communicate with Friends and visitors.

It's heartwarming to see the pleasure and goodwill generated around a small community Garden, whose changing beauty through the years reflects all the care that the Friends put into it, making it the setting for so many happy times.

Wendy Oglome

P.S. Hope, the Wessex Medical Trust (Gosport and Lee) have asked us to let you know that on the evening of 21st November (same date as the Coffee Morning) they're having their inaugural Concert, at St Mary's Church, at 7pm.

A treat for music lovers: the Ladies' Viva Voce Choir, a varied programme with a commentary and serious and solo works appealing to a wide variety of tastes, tickets cost £5 including a glass of wine : ring 92 527662 or 02380 333366 (Trust office)

Please give this to any Committee member - or bring it with you to the Coffee Morning

The Garden Party, 2004.

In order to cater for the number of Friends that would like to attend, do you think:-

1...We should continue to ask Friends to contribute food, on a carefully planned and integrated basis?

YES/NO

2...We should employ professional caterers, raising ticket prices and reducing the funding benefit to do so?

YES/NO

3...If YES, should caterers should do ALL the food, or only PART of it, leaving the Friends a more manageable provision to deal with, and reducing the financial impact.

ALL/PART

Name and Address.....

ROSES in CRESCENT GARDEN 1

TERRACE WALK

