

Spring/Summer 2015

Marston Grange News

Issue 3

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GARDEN FOCUS

Each year the garden throws up new surprises – things I have planted and forgotten about as I move on to the next project. This year it was tulips.

As winter air started to warm with spring sunshine I was rewarded for hours spent grubbing around on my knees last autumn with a heart-warming burst of early colour in the shape of irises, erythroniums, daffodils and tulips. In pots, tubs and borders small shoots heralded early signs of life filling me with a tingling sense of anticipation and the hope that all the hard work and frozen finger tips might be rewarded – and they were. In a year where the blossom disappointed the bulbs certainly made up for it so I shall be adding more next year as the tulips seem to love our sandy well-drained soil.



In the meadow we saw the beginnings of new arrivals such as cowslip and malva, and the yellow rattle continued to do its job of controlling the grasses. We are still hoping for wild orchids and have introduced a small clump in the orchard to start things off – thanks to Anne & Barry Wright.

As always, we cut a path through the meadow to see more clearly the variety of flowers in the sward but also to allow the partridge and hare to use the meadow, and the barn owls once again returned to nest and use it to hunt and feed their young.



The new wildlife pond was completed and a weeping pear and little conifer charmingly named 'Fat Albert' (I'm not making it up) added the surrounding interest which will eventually soften this corner but the birds and bees already love it.



A small but pleasing adjustment to the Walled Garden has been a small change in the shape of the main border to give more planting depth. This has added real interest to this corner and made the garden feel more tantalising to draw you through. Radio York certainly seemed to enjoy this part of the garden on their visit anyway – thanks to Julia Lewis for plugging our NGS day.

And so it looks like Autumn will come early again, as a result of an early spring and cold nights but the August rain brought a pretty second flowering of geraniums, delphiniums and roses to keep the garden going so not a bad year overall.

FIRST SCHOOL

VISIT

'Overall the day was great and the garden was amazing'

Edward Morgan

In July we hosted our first school event with most of Long Marston C of E Primary School visiting us for the day.

The highlight of the day was undoubtedly the firing of the canon, closely followed by the old latrine which stole the show on the history tour.



Thank you to the Sealed Knot for a fun and fascinating talk and demonstrations, and to our helpers on the day - and thanks to the children for being so well behaved on the day and for their lovely letters afterwards. You made us chuckle and we hope that you will come again sometime soon.

NGS and Garden Events

This year we felt that we knew what we were letting ourselves in for with NGS and we had a faithful team of volunteers behind us who were all willing to go through it again with us so we set ourselves a fundraising target of £2000 and I am pleased to say that we surpassed this and made £2200 including the money raised by Sara Gott and the Marie Curie team who provided sandwiches as well as cakes and tea this year. A huge thanks goes to everyone involved - to Sally who is my right hand girl, to Philip Baron and Sally who provided the plants and flowers for the plant stalls, to Dave Cooke who led the battlefield walk with his usual bravado, to Bernadette Lobo for her expertise in the meadow, to Gert Van Hoff for loaning his beautiful sculptures and to Geoff Chambers, my long-suffering gardener, who breaks his back with me all through the year and keeps me smiling - despite the endless daffodil bulbs!!!!



We won't be doing NGS next year due to other things we need to focus on, but hopefully we will be back to help them again in the future.

Another success in 2015 was our 'Plein Air' Art days with local artist Jackie Midgley. The groups were small and intimate allowing Jackie to give more one to one tuition and it intrigued me to see what areas of the farm and garden were chosen for the attention of the artists. This was Jackie's work in progress.



It has been a busy year and we have enjoyed meeting new people and learning along the way. Thank you to all our visitors and supporters in 2015. It has been a great experience.

The garden is continuing to evolve with new plants and schemes all the time. Last weekend we began work on a small sensory and herb garden area around the small greenhouse and this week over 300 tulips, lots of Alliums, more Irises and - my favourites - Erythroniums, all arrived from Parkers to keep me busy for the next month - or so. Watch this space to see where this will take us in 2016, and for what events will ensue please watch our **Events Diary**.

New Developments

In early Spring we decided to 'go for it' and finish off the work we started 2 years ago when we started renovating the old pig sty. In 2014 we had made do with chairs, kindly donated by the church hall, and tables thrown away by the Bar Convent. Now we have our own comfy chairs and light weight folding tables to give us more choice of set up



So, we can now seat up to 40 people theatre or café style or 32 people banqueting style and we have completed the set up by purchasing a laptop, projector and screen for our talks



We hope to be able to host educational and social events in the future which will benefit from these new facilities. And we can also host events for other clubs and societies with similar interests.

Birds in Spring

Our year of events began in April 2015 with a guided bird walk led by RSPB volunteer Barry Bishop. The birds very kindly behaved themselves on the day and the group was greeted by the heron, grey partridge, buzzards amongst others and even roe deer made an appearance. You can follow Barry on his blog for more of his birding adventures. The address to go to is

<http://barryjohnbishop.blogspot.co.uk/2015/04/grey-partridge-on-farm-walk.html>

We hope to host another Farm Walk with Barry next spring so please watch out for the date in our Events Diary

A Final Note



Watch out for 'Hairy Biker' Dave Myers in our back field on his visit to Marston Moor in their new TV series visiting famous historic pubs. Apparently Cromwell's men got drunk at the Black Bull in Otley before coming here to do battle at Marston Moor. I'm sure you will agree that Dave makes a very convincing Pike man.