

Friends of Valley Gardens

Happy Christmas



December 2022 No 41



**Photographs – Harper and Sue sweep the steps.
A well earned break.**

Work Parties

Sunday December 11th

Meet under the bridge at 10am.

We have just had the one work party since the last newsletter. It was a decent turn out, especially as England were playing in the final of the 20 over World Championship. Nine of us cleared litter and leaves from paths and borders as well as planting ferns and foxgloves that had been donated to us by Susan Harrison and Eric Hewes. I also planted a Rosemary plant, donated by Susan, in the shrub borders near the Crescent entrance.

In the last work party of the year, this coming Sunday 11th, we will be mainly litter-picking. The recent rain will have made working on the borders an impossibility.

In Other News

One of our local councillors, Janet Jefferson, has donated some money to the group out of her locality budget. This will pay for plants to fill the bare borders that surround the lily pond. They are quite difficult areas to find plants for as some are very dry because they are under the bridge and others very wet because they take the water that flows off the rockery. However we have come up with a list of plants that we think will thrive and will get them ordered to be planted in the spring. Thanks to Chris at the Parks Department for his help in compiling the list of plants.

We would also like to thank Susan Harrison for her donation of ferns and Rosemary and Eric Hewes for his donation of Foxglove plants.

Photographs from the top

The William Holman Hunt painting - 1863

The incense Burner as a flower vase – about 1900

The incense Burner as a Fountain – about 1910

The Incense Burner in the Council Offices



Annual General Meeting

Twenty eight people attended the AGM early in November. This was an excellent turn out. The business part of the meeting was dealt with quickly and efficiently by Felicity, tea and coffee were then served and the talk that followed was well received.

I've included at the side, some of the slides I used to trace the history of the fountain that used to stand in the middle of the lily pond. I thought members who were not able to attend the AGM might be interested.

The fountain started life as an incense burner on London Bridge for the marriage of Edward, Prince of Wales to Princess Alexandra of Denmark, on March 10th, 1863. One hundred of the burners were used to line the bridge to help mask the appalling smell emanating from the River Thames. The burners can be seen in the painting by William Holman Hunt, which shows the celebrations taking place on the bridge.

One of the Incense Burners was bought by John Sharpin, ex-mayor of Scarborough and we believe the person mainly responsible for getting the valley designated as a public park. The burner was placed in the centre of a flower bed as a grand flower pot. Later it was converted to a fountain and placed on an island in the middle of the Lily Pond. It remained in the park for over a hundred years until it disappeared in the 1980's.

It was rescued from a council storeroom by the local Arts Society who restored it as a Millennium Project and it now stands in the corner of the reception area in the Council Offices.

The talk also covered some of the more colourful residents of the gardens, Lord Dennison, Earl of Londesborough, George Reresby Sitwell and Lady Ida Dennison. Perhaps more about these characters in a future newsletter.

