

Memorial Garden

"The Glory of the Garden... lies in more than meets the eye...it shall never pass away.....half a proper gardener's work is done upon his[her] knees" (Kipling)

Have you seen the garden recently? The hard landscaping was completed in December and the new planting carried out in the spring. It is now getting established and producing colour and interest. The two paths, centre square and seating area are in red square paving stones. The wall alongside the path to the kitchen has been painted Suffolk pink and is graced by three purpose built trellises, under each is a large half container planted with mauve clematis, honeysuckle and lobelia. The garden itself is bordered by rosemary and junipers. The main area has a mixture of plants, including convolvulus, choisya, mahonia, lavenders, hypericum, ceanothus, hebes, salix integra and roses. It has cost £1800 which has come mainly from Barbara Tallerman's bequest and partly from donations.

But what caused us to embark on this project? You can see from the plans of the church and hall (framed print in the Common Room) that a memorial garden had always been planned for the scattering or burial of ashes. It was a formal rose garden whose upkeep was managed by one or more active members. I remember Norah Hinkins working in it. She, and her sister Bertha, were stalwarts of the congregation, primary school teachers, who joined the church in the 1930's. Norah had a particular gift for flower arranging and love of gardens. Around 1980 she had to relinquish the garden and the committee considered what to do. James Richardson, a garden enthusiast who managed to create at least six distinct gardens in his own long back garden, came up with a design - very formal, lots of gravel, and a raised central feature. This didn't find favour. Instead the committee decided to completely restock the garden with roses, mostly given in memory. However, roses do not thrive in that spot and eventually Vivienne Alford brought her energy to bear and introduced perennials from her own garden and planted bulbs. The garden took on a 'cottage' appearance and there was all-the-year-round interest. When she retired we were fortunate that Bernice Wright took over and continued the scheme. She also donated the present comfortable seat (to replace the previous one which had worn out). When Bernice retired from active gardening, the garden received minimal attention for a year or two. Then fortunately Sabrina Lewins and John Coates came forward. Sabrina's creative talents were enthused by the prospect of reviving the garden. A garden group was formed, much consultation took place, Barbara Tallerman's bequest arrived and, with the blessing and encouragement of the church committee, Sabrina and her team undertook the re-creation of the garden.

Despite reservations from some members about the colour scheme for the paving and the painted wall, the garden has received many compliments, particularly from users of the Hall and visitors. The garden is in full view from the Common Room and is passed by all who come to visit the Minister's study. The seat is used by the minister when reflecting on his forthcoming sermon, by Mackenzie School of Speech and Drama students studying their assignments, by gardeners taking a few minutes rest from their labours and by others who want a few minutes of peaceful contemplation.

So let us give grateful thanks for Sabrina and her team, to past members, for those who made bequests and donations, and to present members who take a critical interest.

And the future? Some of you may not know that if you venture beyond the kitchen door you come to the steps down to the boiler house and to a long shed against the boundary wall. Originally an open-sided shed for coke for the coke-fired boiler (until mid 1960's when the gas boiler was installed), subsequently walled, it provides a secure storage space. The open area alongside has bike stands, water butt, composting bin and wheelie bins. It is gravelled - the gravel was donated by Bertha Hinkins and is now getting a little thin. The area is tidy but a candidate for 'improvement', perhaps for a children's garden.

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