NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2022

NUMBER:90

PATRON – JOHN GRUNDY

Reg Charity no: 702260

THE FRIENDS OF JESMOND DENE

JESMOND DENE AT DAWN

Starting off the Jesmond Community Festival with our Dawn Chorus Nature Walk at 4.30am.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was on Sunday, 22nd May 2022 at Millfield Café courtesy of the Risi family.

Before the AGM, all members were sent the agenda and minutes of the last meeting (2021). The financial report was delivered on the day to all present. Officers proposed, seconded and voted in as follows: -

Chair	**Clive Gerrard**
Treasurer	**Jacki Holmes**
Secretary	**Vacant post – acting Yvonne Shannon**

Committee members: John Blakemore, Geoffrey Carter, John Telfer, Sandra Grant, Jack White is the co-opted representatives from Urban Green Newcastle.

Warm welcome to **new member and Membership Secretary Susan Lord.**

Geoffrey Carter is our Independent examiner for the annual accounts.

Patron: - **John Grundy**

Thank you to all our members for the donations and subscriptions, with your help The FOJD have been able to fund projects to help maintain and improve the Dene.

It is very important that more people join the committee so we can safeguard the future of the FOJD. If anyone is interested in the post of Secretary, or becoming a Committee member please email:
friends.of.jesmond.dene@gmail.com

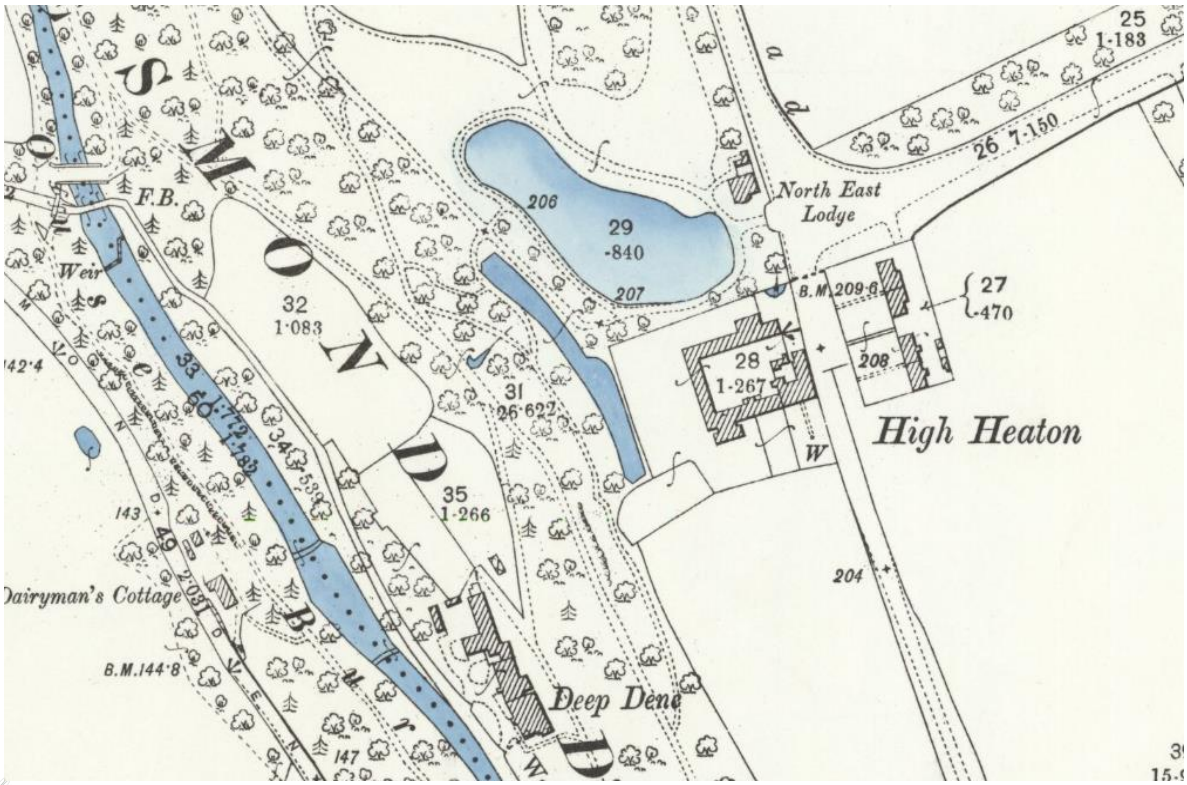
The next AGM will be May 2023, Date and time TBA.

THE BANQUETING HALL AND ITS HYDRAULIC ORGAN PART 2

In the Autumn 2020 issue of the Newsletter I described how the organ in Sir William Armstrong's Banqueting Hall was used to entertain his guests as they dined at glittering banquets, and how it was also used at numerous charitable functions, large and small, throughout the mid and late 1860s. I also remarked on the fact that many articles and books about Jesmond Dene mentioned that the Banqueting Hall organ was water-powered, and that the water supply came from Paddy Freemans, but that none went on to give any actual details of how this was done. Here in Part 2 (which has been delayed because of the closure of archive offices during the pandemic) I will investigate the likely means by which the organ was powered by water.

The source of the water that powered the organ could not, as is sometimes stated, have been Paddy Freeman's Lake. When the organ was installed in 1863 the lake was just a small duckpond and would not have been a reliable water supply. It was not enlarged to its present size until about 1890.

So how was it done? There are no known plans or original documents available which will answer this question, so we must rely on contemporary newspaper and magazine articles. A feature in the Newcastle Daily Chronicle on August 4th 1863 about a charitable event held the previous day gives an informative description: "*The overshot water-wheel of the old flint mill now performs a variety of work. By its aid water from the stream is pumped into a reservoir on the hill top, from whence pipes are conveyed over the grounds and to the workmen's cottages: and the pressure of the water blows the bellows of the organ in the Banqueting Hall*". So it appears that a reservoir was constructed for the purpose of supplying water for the organ and for other uses. The site of this reservoir can be seen on the 1894 Ordnance Survey map of the area. It was just to the south-west of where Paddy Freeman's Lake is today.



Extract from 25" Ordnance Survey Map 1894

. The reservoir was large, around 100 metres long and up to 10 metres wide and, it is believed, between 2 and 3 metres deep. It was constructed by excavating a hole in the ground and probably some of the excavated material was used to form raised sides. As the newspaper article described, the water from the reservoir was used for several purposes, which would explain its large volume. The reservoir has now been filled in, but some evidence of its existence can still be seen. The southern section is rough uncultivated land but beneath the vegetation there is evidence of the raised sides and a depression in the centre. The northern part is fairly flat and cultivated but some of the existing paths approximately follow the reservoir's northern perimeter.

Armstrong had acquired the old mill, and the land at Paddy Freeman's, when he purchased land on the east side of the valley the previous year. The newspaper article says that the source of the water was the Ouseburn and that it was pumped up to the reservoir using the water wheel at the old mill. It would be a relatively simple matter to attach a pump to the existing water wheel. Indeed, a decade or so later, by which time Sir William had acquired several farms in the Coquet valley, he installed a water wheel to pump drinking water from a river or stream to a storage tank at Warton Farm near Thropton. The actual wheel and pump which he used for this was restored in 1997 and then for many years it was used at Cragside to pump water from the Debden Burn up to the formal gardens high above the river, a scenario very similar to that in Jesmond Dene.

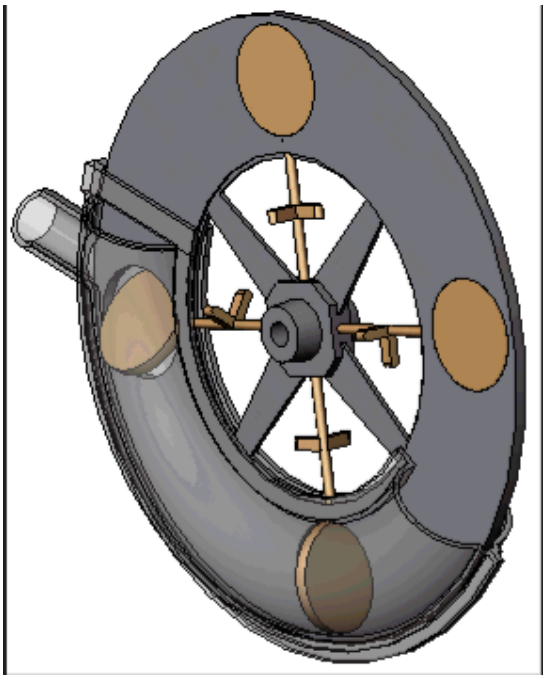
Water-wheel and pump from Warton Farm, now at Cragside

The water wheel at the old mill probably operated continuously so an overflow from the reservoir would be required. There is a stone water gully which would have served that purpose just below the reservoir site. It leads to a waterfall with a wishing well below, and from there the water would return down to the Ouseburn. The channel and well can be seen on the map.

Reservoir Overflow Gully

Having worked out how the reservoir was supplied with water, the next question is 'how was that water used to operate the organ?' The newspaper article correctly says that it was the *pressure* of the water that was used to blow the bellows. As a young man while fishing, William Armstrong had observed how inefficient a nearby water wheel was at it used only the kinetic energy of the flowing water as it dropped a few feet. How much more efficient it would be, he mused, if the water from higher up the stream could be used by confining it in a pipe to produce a column of water under pressure.

He designed an engine to work with pressurised water and had a prototype manufactured at Henry Watson's works in High Bridge in 1838. In the diagrammatic drawing (illustrated), water enters the engine under pressure on the left, the discs are caused to turn through 90° after they enter the tube, and they are thus pushed by the pressure of the water, causing the wheel to rotate. The water exits the tube from the right. Water would have been piped down from the reservoir, crossing the river, probably attached to one of the bridges, and then up the other side to the Banqueting Hall, giving a head of water of about 30 metres. Some pieces of broken remnants of the cast iron pipework are known to have been lying on the ground beside what was once the lily pond as late as 1969. A crank mechanism would have been attached to the circumference of the wheel or to its axis to convert the circular motion to reciprocating motion to blow the bellows of the organ. A valve in the Banqueting Hall would have been opened to operate the bellows when required, so no water was wasted when the organ was not in use.



Armstrong's Improved Water-wheel, 1838

It is not known for how long the organ was water-powered, but the Council cleared the weeds from the reservoir annually until 1912. Electricity had been installed in the Banqueting Hall in 1904, so it seems plausible that an electric motor would have replaced the water wheel sometime in that period.

This series of articles will be concluded next time when I will describe the actual organ and its location in the Banqueting Hall and investigate what happened to it.

JOHN TELFER FOJD and Volunteer john.a.telfer@btinternet.com

John will be giving a Zoom presentation on the above to our members on 14th November 2022. (joining details will be sent to members).

GREEN FLAG AWARD

Jesmond Dene has won the prestigious Green Flag Award for the **9th year** running. Three other Newcastle Parks have also been listed :- Leazes, Walker and Exhibition Parks. It is good that our park has been recognised nationally and has met all of the stipulated criteria once again. Well done to everyone involved.

ORIGINAL MEMBERSHIP STAMP

This is the stamp used for membership cards when the FOJD initially started. (1975). It has been presented to the FOJD Archive by Mr. R. Pattinson, his wife, an artist designed the stamp. Some of our founding members may still have one of the original cards.

FOJD Membership Stamp.

TREES

The FOJD approached Urban Green in November 2021 for permission to buy specimen trees to plant in Jesmond Dene. (totally funded by the FOJD) Initially we thought to replace the three Poplar trees which were part of the Armstrong original plantings opposite the Banqueting Hall and which had come down several years earlier on reaching the end of their natural life. The issue was discussed during Committee meetings with UG representative Sarah Capes several times and members expressed interest in purchasing other types of tree if the Poplars weren't viable.

Given Storm Arwen and subsequent following storms which felled many trees in Jesmond Dene and the surrounding parks we thought it might be good to start planting again; in addition 2022 is Queen Elizabeth II 'green canopy year', and following her death this is still to be encouraged. The FOJD have been informed that until a Woodland Management Plan has been drawn up there can be no tree planting at all in Jesmond Dene. Given that, as we understand it UG have accepted a grant of £6,000 from a Law firm for planting 750 trees over the next 5 years, the FOJD are very disappointed by this decision and hope some progress can be made in the near future.

YVONNE SHANNON FOJD and Volunteer

FOJD EVENTS FOR THE QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE YEAR 2022

The four planned walks (mentioned in the last Newsletter) have been very successful and have helped us to show off our wonderful parks left to the people of Newcastle by Lord William Armstrong. Two of these walks were part of the Jesmond Community Festival and, as you can see on our cover photograph (taken 7th May) even though it was an early start people are very interested in listening and spotting birds in Jesmond Dene.

Mike Cook, the walk leader, sent this list of 19 species encountered on the way:-

Mallard, Feral Pigeon, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Moorhen, Tawny Owl, Magpie, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Chiff Chaff, Blackcap, Wren, Nuthatch, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Chaffinch.

Mike also looked after visitors on the Bees and Butterflies Nature walk held in Jesmond Dene.

Photograph taken 28th May 2022 on our **'Bees and Butterflies'** nature walk, Colemans Field, Jesmond Dene.

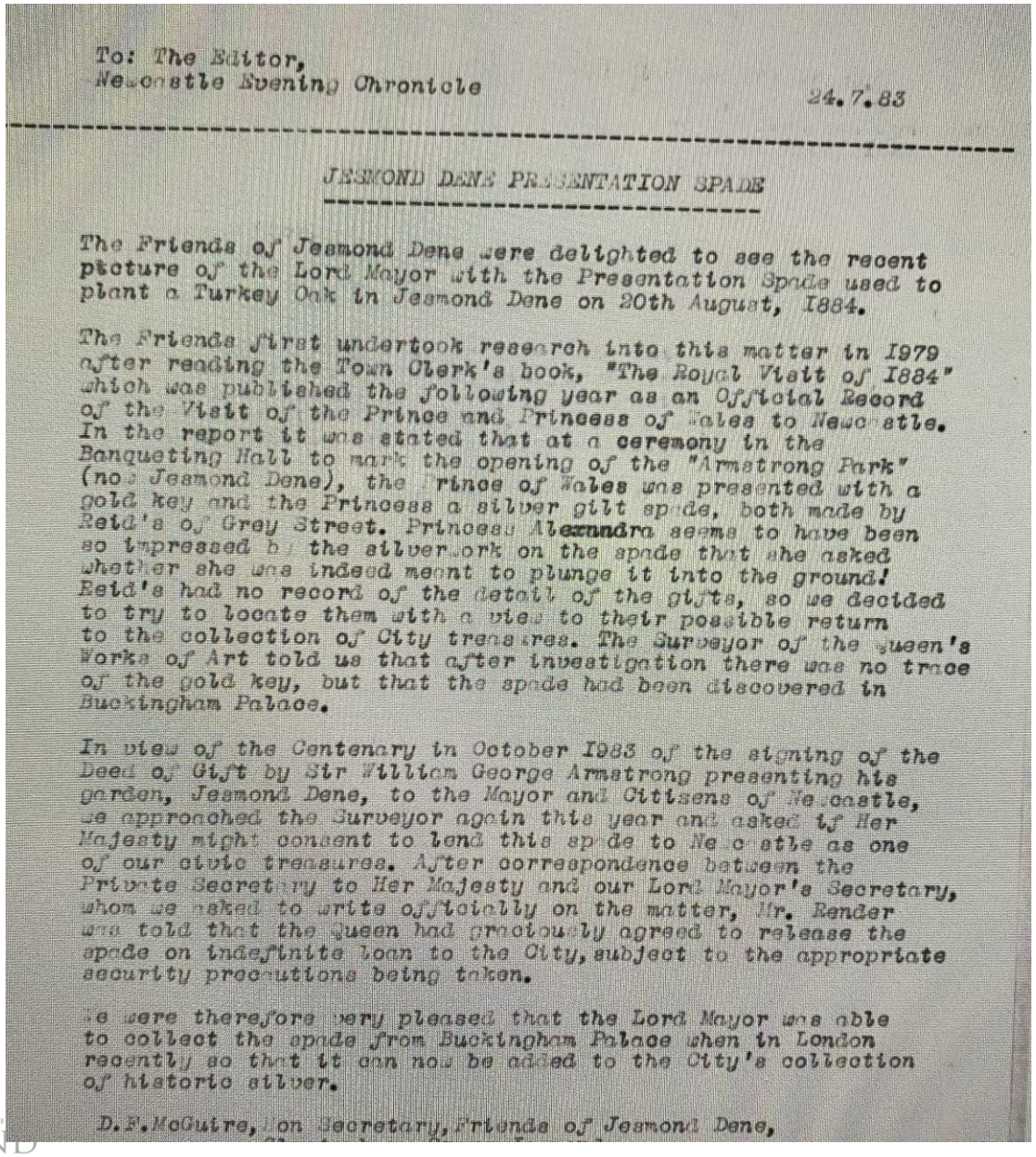
Many thanks go to Clive, Chris and John FOJD for leading the 'Royal Route' walk on the 28th April and the 20th August. The latter date was especially significant in that on 20th August 1884 HRH the Prince and Princess of Wales travelled to Newcastle and officially opened Jesmond Dene.

They came by train on the 19th and stayed at Cragside with Sir William and Lady Margaret Armstrong. Their four-day stay is thoroughly documented by Hill Motum the town clerk and by journalists of the day.

Hill Motum writes that at the ceremony held at the Banqueting Hall ' the Prince of Wales was given a gold key as a memento …and immediately on its receipt said I declare this park now open'. The Princess of Wales was to plant a five-foot-high Turkey Oak sapling outside the Banqueting Hall. The Mayor handed her a spade of oak and silver gilt, the shaft being black oak made from the timber of the old Tyne Bridge. The Princess accepted the spade and turned to Sir William to ask what she was expected to do with it. He replied that she must throw 'one or two shovelfuls' of soil on to the roots. Hill Motum describes that 'without further question Her Royal Highness performed this operation, bending to the work with spirit and agility'.

Unfortunately, this very same Turkey Oak was brought down by Storm Arwen in 2021. As there are several turkey oaks in the Dene the FOJD have been told UG are not expecting to replace it.

In 1979, Don McGuire one of the founder members of the FOJD began to research into the location of the golden key and ceremonial spade and began a correspondence with the Lord Chamberlains Office, St James Palace. I've enclosed the 2 following letters.



To: The Editor,
Newcastle Evening Chronicle

24.7.83

JESMOND DENE PRESENTATION SPADE

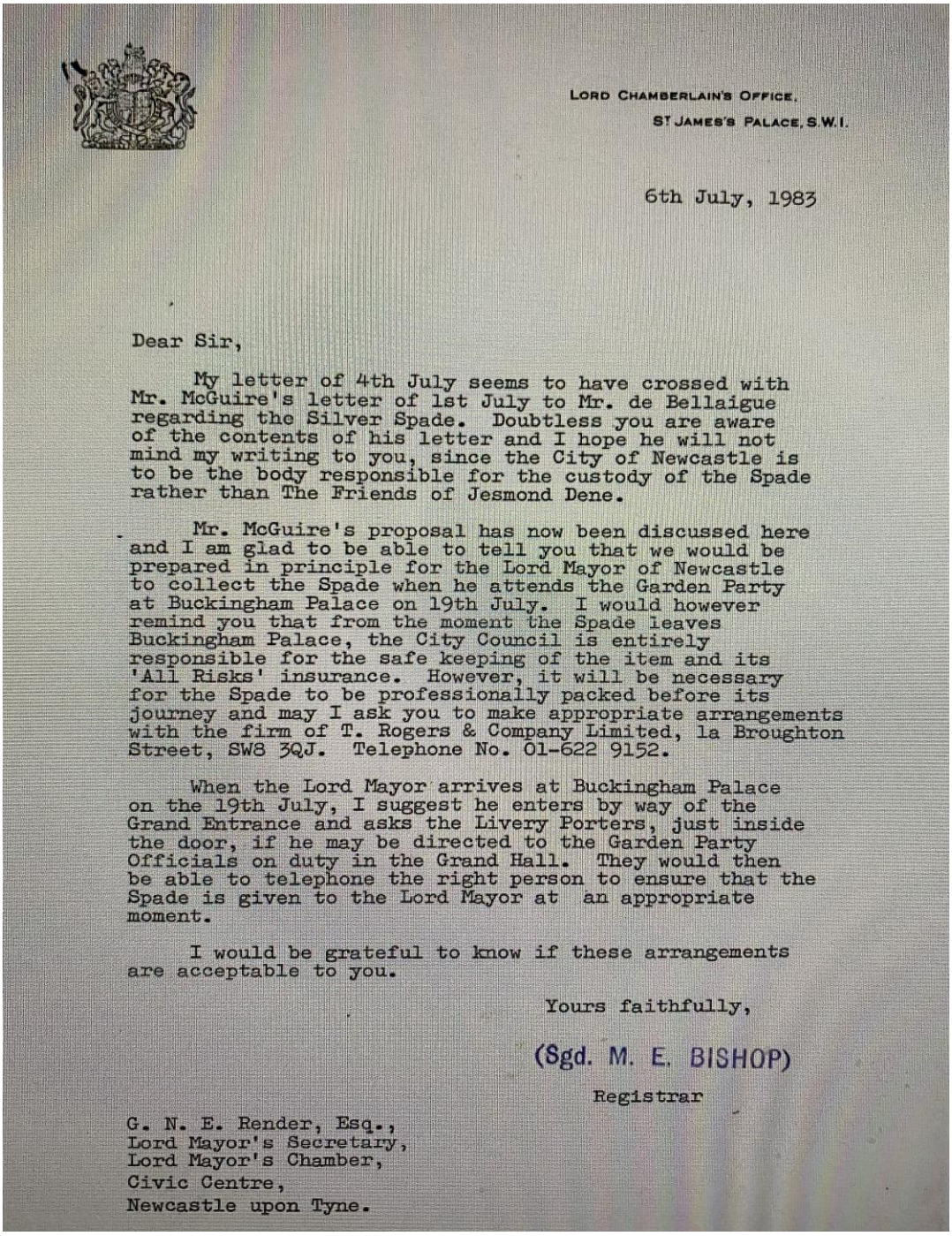
The Friends of Jesmond Dene were delighted to see the recent picture of the Lord Mayor with the Presentation Spade used to plant a Turkey Oak in Jesmond Dene on 20th August, 1884.

The Friends first undertook research into this matter in 1979 after reading the Town Clerk's book, "The Royal Visit of 1884" which was published the following year as an Official Record of the Visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to Newcastle. In the report it was stated that at a ceremony in the Banqueting Hall to mark the opening of the "Armstrong Park" (now Jesmond Dene), the Prince of Wales was presented with a gold key and the Princess a silver gilt spade, both made by Reid's of Grey Street. Princess Alexandra seems to have been so impressed by the silverwork on the spade that she asked whether she was indeed meant to plunge it into the ground! Reid's had no record of the details of the gifts, so we decided to try to locate them with a view to their possible return to the collection of City treasures. The Surveyor of the Queen's Works of Art told us that after investigation there was no trace of the gold key, but that the spade had been discovered in Buckingham Palace.

In view of the Centenary in October 1983 of the signing of the Deed of Gift by Sir William George Armstrong presenting his garden, Jesmond Dene, to the Mayor and Citizens of Newcastle, we approached the Surveyor again this year and asked if Her Majesty might consent to lend this spade to Newcastle as one of our civic treasures. After correspondence between the Private Secretary to Her Majesty and our Lord Mayor's Secretary, whom we asked to write officially on the matter, Mr. Render was told that the Queen had graciously agreed to release the spade on indefinite loan to the City, subject to the appropriate security precautions being taken.

We were therefore very pleased that the Lord Mayor was able to collect the spade from Buckingham Palace when in London recently so that it can now be added to the City's collection of historic silver.

D.F.McGuire, Hon Secretary, Friends of Jesmond Dene,



LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE,
ST JAMES'S PALACE, S.W.1.

6th July, 1983

Dear Sir,

My letter of 4th July seems to have crossed with Mr. McGuire's letter of 1st July to Mr. de Bellaigue regarding the Silver Spade. Doubtless you are aware of the contents of his letter and I hope he will not mind my writing to you, since the City of Newcastle is to be the body responsible for the custody of the Spade rather than The Friends of Jesmond Dene.

Mr. McGuire's proposal has now been discussed here and I am glad to be able to tell you that we would be prepared in principle for the Lord Mayor of Newcastle to collect the Spade when he attends the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 19th July. I would however remind you that from the moment the Spade leaves Buckingham Palace, the City Council is entirely responsible for the safe keeping of the item and its 'All Risks' insurance. However, it will be necessary for the Spade to be professionally packed before its journey and may I ask you to make appropriate arrangements with the firm of T. Rogers & Company Limited, 1a Broughton Street, SW8 3QJ. Telephone No. 01-622 9152.

When the Lord Mayor arrives at Buckingham Palace on the 19th July, I suggest he enters by way of the Grand Entrance and asks the Livery Porters, just inside the door, if he may be directed to the Garden Party Officials on duty in the Grand Hall. They would then be able to telephone the right person to ensure that the Spade is given to the Lord Mayor at an appropriate moment.

I would be grateful to know if these arrangements are acceptable to you.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd. M. E. BISHOP)

Registrar

G. N. E. Render, Esq.,
Lord Mayor's Secretary,
Lord Mayor's Chamber,
Civic Centre,
Newcastle upon Tyne.

It does seem a bit hard that after all Don's hard work in tracing the items and after his copious correspondence with the Lord Chamberlain (there are several letters) that it is the Lord Mayor of Newcastle who went to the Palace to collect the spade! But, we remember that it was Don McGuire (FOJD) who contrived to have the silver gilt ceremonial spade returned to Newcastle on permanent loan.

Yvonne Shannon FOJD and Volunteer Ranger

Summer tasks performed by Jesmond Dene Volunteer Rangers (2022)

We still have a small team of four who can work unsupervised and do whatever work that is required by the Rangers. Our team meets every Tuesday and Friday morning. There are separate volunteer sessions on a Wednesday morning run on a more casual basis for anyone who wishes to volunteer.

Litter Picking

Whenever we are going somewhere to work in the Dene one of us takes a black bag and some litter pickers so that we can pick up any litter we see on the way. Also, after sunny bank holidays we might do a litter pick in the areas where people have picnics.

Cutting back path edges

We spend a few sessions cutting back path edges where the shrubs are starting to encroach as well as clearing any mud that has washed onto the paths. We especially do this on the paths used by the Park Run. The volunteers in our team are qualified to use strimmers and hedge trimmers which makes us much more productive in our work.

Leaf blowing

We have had several sessions with the leaf blowers clearing the paths in Jesmond Dene, Armstrong Park and Heaton Park. When we do any cutting back along paths we can use the leaf blower to blow away any debris. We will be doing a lot more leaf-blowing soon as the leaves start to fall from the trees.

Mending fences

During the winter we mended sections of fencing that were damaged by falling trees during the storms. Since then there have been a number of sections damaged by vandalism. Unfortunately, a lot of the fencing that was installed during work done under the Lottery Grant (about 13 years ago) is starting become weakened due to the uprights rotting. It is these weakened sections that have been damaged. The section next to the boardwalk leading up towards Armstrong Bridge was repaired recently. This work often means removing the rotten old fence posts and concreting in new ones. We also recently did some work strengthening the boardwalk which was beginning to collapse.

Volunteer Rangers Mending Fences in Jesmond Dene 2022

Mending paths
We occasionally mend holes in the paths by filling them with cold-fill macadam which is then tamped down to compact it.

Mending benches
Occasionally some of the benches become damaged and we spend time trying to mend these when we have the appropriate material to do so. A recent example was the bench at the top of Cherry Tree walk that needed several of the narrow slats replacing. Most of the benches are quite difficult to repair in that they have to be almost dismantled just to replace one slat.

Volunteer Rangers mending benches 2022

More Fence Mending 2022

Outdoor Classroom
The Outdoor Classroom has been disused since before the Covid lockdown and has become rather overgrown. Apart from that, the large dipping pond seems to have developed a leak and has run dry. We are trying to resolve this problem with the intention of bringing the pond back into use. We have started some work to tidy up the nature area by strimming the wildflower meadow and weeding the paths. I managed to get a bee-sting whilst strimming the meadow. Apparently the bees don't like the noise of petrol-driven strimmers near their hive.

DAVE POSTE FOJD and Volunteer Ranger

Please see up to date activities and events:-

FOJD
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/groups/757773184342507/
Web https://www.jesmonddene.org.uk/
Urban Green
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/urbangreenncl/
Web https://urbangreennewcastle.org/

FRIENDS OF JESMOND DENE COMMITTEE LIST

Patron	**John Grundy**
Chair	Clive Gerrard
Treasurer	Jacki Holmes
Secretary	Vacant post – acting Yvonne Shannon
Members	Geoffrey Carter, John Blakemore, Robert Brandt, John Telfer, Sandra Grant
Membership Sec.	Susan Lord
Newsletter	Yvonne Shannon

Urban Green Representative Jack White@urbangreennewcastle.org
To volunteer contact:- volunteer@urbangreennewcastle.org .

Webmaster Carlton Reid http://www.jesmonddene.org.uk

Next Newsletter contributions or any other queries to: -
Friends of Jesmond Dene, c/o Ouseburn Parks Visitor Centre, Millfield House, Red Walk, Jesmond Dene, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7BQ or email as above.

Subscriptions are set at a flat rate of £5 p.a. for households, paid by standing order. Our Membership Secretary is available if you need help or advice on how to join - contact **Susan Lord**, FOJD at the address above. To set up the standing order you will need the bank details for the Friends bank - The Sort Code is **30 93 55** The Account Number is **01464356**. Would you also please ask to assign a payment reference of your own full name (forename and surname) so that we can correctly identify your payment.

To join the FOJD contact **Susan Lord**, at the address above **or** friends.of.jesmond.dene@gmail.com

To join the Jesmond Dene Volunteer Rangers or if you are interested in the Adopt-a-Plot scheme please contact:
Volunteering and Engagement Coordinator volunteer@urbangreennewcastle.org .

Reg Charity no: 702260 Web: https://www.jesmonddene.org.uk/
Postal address: 'Friends of Jesmond Dene', c/o Ouseburn Parks' Visitor Centre, Red Walk, Jesmond Dene, Newcastle, NE7 7BQ.