

OLDE RIPTON GARDEN CLUB

A 40 YEAR HISTORY



GROWING TOGETHER

1976 – 2016

Written by Joyce Donnelly, March 2016

The Olde Ripton Garden Club was founded in 1976, sponsored by the Huntington Garden Club and the Country Garden Club of Monroe, and was accepted into the Federated Garden Clubs, Inc. of CT in August 1976.

Why Olde Ripton? The area now known as Shelton was settled by the Paugusset tribe and called Pootatuck. When settlers moved in from Stratford they referred to the settlement as Coram. In 1717 there were fifty families in Coram and they petitioned for the formation of a separate parish to be known as Ripton Parish, however, they were still a part of Stratford.

Huntington Garden Club: When did the Huntington Garden Club exist and what did they do? Well, apparently they did a lot for many years. Newspaper articles dating back to September 16, 1941, show that they were a very active club. Flower shows and garden tours were held almost annually and the club participated in many other flower shows in neighboring towns. Active in the club were the Bronsons (the last family to live in the house now the home of the Shelton Historical Society.) In 1952 the Club won six prizes at the Connecticut State Flower Show. A Bridgeport Post newspaper article in 1952 reports about the planting of maple trees and dogwood trees on Huntington Street which had been going on for three years.

In 1953 Harry Bronson prepared a special exhibit on methods of propagation in plants and conservation of plantings to attract birds for the CT State Flower Show. In 1957 at a private flower show in Huntington both Mr. and Mrs. Bronson took prizes for their peonies.

A 1969 newspaper article reported the annual planting of geraniums and petunies at the fountain on Huntington Green. The year of 1969 also had the Club sponsoring a holiday door decorating contest.

In 1977 the Huntington Garden Club was planning an annual picnic and had 33 members. That year they also joined the Shelton Land Trust.

1981 was the last time any mention could be found about the Huntington Garden Club. At that time they were one of the participants at a Festival Of Tables at the Huntington Congregational Church which was sponsored by the Olde Ripton Garden Club.

The first president and founder of the Olde Ripton Garden Club was Julia Adams, affectionally known in town as “The African Violet Lady.” The first membership list consisted of 76 members who became the “Charter Members.” Four of these charter members remain members of the Club today.

As per the First Constitution and By-Laws of the Olde Ripton Garden Club “Article II 0 Objects: The purpose of this Club is to encourage interest in all phases of Gardening and Flower Arranging; the betterment and beautification of the Community; the protection of our natural resources; and to promote better horticultural practices.”

The yearly dues were \$5.00; payable in two installments of \$2.50 each.

The committee chairman for community projects was Charter Member Claire Norris who has remained a very active member for the past 40 years. The Club contacted then Mayor Kelly requesting permission for the Club to make Christmas wreaths for city buildings and at the December 1976 meeting wreaths were made for City buildings and all public and private schools in Shelton. The annual wreath making for the city buildings and schools continues today.



In December, 1976, an anonymous donation of \$500 was received and this was the seed money for the Club, not to be spent but left in the treasury. A checking account was then opened.

Summer of 1977 was a busy time. A float was made and decorated for the Memorial Day parade; a garden was planted at the Bronson House and flowers planted at the Derby Senior Center since Derby had no garden club. Flower arrangements were made and left monthly at the Plumb Library. The Club had their first flower show in June 1977.

The Olde Ripton Garden Club quickly became involved with the Huntington Historical Society, another relatively new organization. The Historical Society was formed in 1969, purchased the Marks House in 1970 for \$1.00 and moved it to its present location at 70 Ripton Road. The Trap Falls School House which was built in 1872 was also moved to the property. The property had been given to the Society by the Wisner Wilsons, retired farmers. There was a greenhouse on the property. In 1977, permission was given for the Olde Ripton Garden Club to use the greenhouse and the flowers grown there were used for planting in city gardens and for sale at the plant sale.

An objective of the Olde Ripton Garden Club was to assist in the maintenance of the Historical Society grounds and establish flower beds on the property. Local Boy Scouts assisted in cleaning out the greenhouse and digging new flower beds around it. The greenhouse was unheated and was utilized to grow annuals from seed each spring. Sixteen members were scheduled to check and water twice a day for 6 weeks. Ten to twenty people participated at cleanup and planting of the gardens. Each year several hundred plants were used to decorate a float for the Memorial Day Parade and plant the Historical Society Gardens and other city beautification projects.

In 1978, the Olde Ripton Garden Club members established a small herb and fragrance garden in the rear of the Marks House (now known as the Bronson house for the last family who lived there). The Garden Club helped the society with many other projects; making and donating forty dried flower arrangements for centerpieces for the Historical Balls in 1978 and 1980. Three house tours were also conducted by the society and garden club members served as hostesses and arranged and provided appropriate garden flowers and arrangements. The Olde Ripton

Garden Club has worked closely with the Society supporting and cooperating with their efforts to preserve part of the history of the area. Harry Bronson's peonies were transplanted and a peony bed established by the house.



ORIGINAL GARDEN AND GREENHOUSE 1978



READY TO PLANT



LAYOUT OF THE HERB GARDEN

The Historical Center Complex was placed on the Connecticut Register of Historic Places in 1987. In 1995 the name Huntington Historical Society was changed to the Shelton Historical Society.

A guest policy was established for the garden club; if the guest becomes a member there is no charge, however, if the guest attended for a program of interest to them there would be a charge of \$1.00.

In 1978 another flower show was held and civic gardens expanded; the civic committee completed plantings at Huntington and Intermediate Schools as well as Lafayette Field, the Sunnyside Boat Ramp and the police station.

In September of 1978, the guest speaker at the Club program was from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. The station was founded in 1875 and is the oldest one in the country. Over the years the Club has had many interesting and informative programs presented by the Agricultural Station, an asset to our community and state.

The Olde Ripton Garden Club quickly became involved in community matters, and in 1978 the City requested that a garden club representative become a member of the Conservation Board and Julie Adams became a member. 1979 found members attending a Planning & Zoning Commission meeting in a group to support the "Save the Green Program."

The Club had their first bus trip on May 15, 1979. This trip was to the N.Y. Botanical Gardens and cost \$4.15 per person including a tip for the bus driver. Also in May the club had a plant sharing meeting where members were to bring plant cuttings from their gardens and bread wrappers for the cuttings to share with other members.

1979 New England Regional Conference: package plan- 2 days conference including 2 lunches, speakers both days, one banquet – total price \$22.00 per person. Add hotel reservation – single \$21.50 per night, double \$31.50 per night plus tax.

Discussions were also begun about a scholarship for the high school and the membership approved the awarding of a \$50 scholarship to a deserving high school student; the student would be selected by the high school staff and would be a Shelton High School student entering the field of horticulture or forestry.

<i>Olde Ripton Garden Club</i>			
FINANCIAL REPORT			
September 1, 1978 - August 31, 1979			
Beginning Balance 9-1-78		\$	
Savings Account			681.23
Checking Account			80.73
<u>INCOME</u>			
Dues	3290.00		
Greenhouse, calendars, Raffles, Bright of America	412.16		
Interest-	43.16		
Total		745.32	
			\$1,507.28
<u>DISBURSEMENTS</u>			
Program - Speaker	50.00		
Slides	4.00		
Rental - Library & Church	95.00		
Refreshments	28.56		
Memorial - Olga Heyse	15.00		
Supplies	112.07		
Bulbs - City Beautification	26.00		
Trees (3) - " "	15.00		
Scholarship	50.00		
Landscape Course	36.00		
Bank Charge (Lost Check)	5.00		
Membership to Fed. Garden Clubs	125.00		
Total		561.63	
Checkbook Balance - 8-31-79		176.70	
Savings Account Balance - 8-31-79		768.95	
			<u>\$1,507.28</u>
Increase in Financial Position 9-1-78 to 8-31-79		\$	183.06

The first Plant Sale was held on Sunday, June 20, 1979 at the Historical Complex and raised \$80.00. Summer of 1979 had members busy with garden projects at City Hall, the Historical Society grounds and the library.

At the September 1979 meeting the status of city beautification was discussed and it was felt that the Club's effort were "discouraging at best." The laurel and azeleas at City Hall were dying, a tree and a bush were vandalized. Shrubs and bushes planted elsewhere had died. It was mentioned that perhaps the club was trying to do too much with too few people and that changes needed to be made. Following this at the November 1979 meeting the civic beautification committee requested permission from the Library Board to upgrade and maintain the grounds around the library – in other words concentrating their efforts on one spot that the members would all see when attending the monthly meetings. In January 1980 the Library Board had given permission for the work on the Library grounds and the city Conservation Commission had applied for \$300 for us to use. However, they could not remove overgrown trees at the library. The Club would continue to maintain a flower bed on the Green and continue the garden at the Police Station. A motion was made and approved to increase the scholarship for a Shelton High School student to \$100.00. Due to the increasing costs of everything the board recommended raising the dues to \$8 per year.

Watering the gardens in some places was a large problem. Water had to be carried from home as there was no water available on Huntington Green. Thus it was decided to continue current projects; police station, Huntington Green, Plumb Library, and the Historical Society Complex. No new projects added.

The year of 1981 began with 49 members. There was a new state wide project to try and reintroduce bluebirds back into Connecticut and members were encouraged to purchase nesting boxes for their yards. That summer a total of 546 flowers were grown at the greenhouse and planted around the city and additional flowers were purchased for the Derby Senior Center and the Historical Complex. A suggestion was made to eliminate January and February meetings and

this was put aside for further discussion. Actually 30 years later this suggestion was once again revisited and this time the meeting schedule was changed and this schedule is now followed.

In 1983 the Huntington Historical Society requested that the Garden Club assist in the redesigning and enlargement of the herb garden. The herbs grown there would be used for potpourri which the 500 school children who tour the building throughout the year would mix and take home with them. The herb garden was completed during the summer by the Club; society members laid the foundation and a sun dial was installed. A dedication was held in September 1983. The Club also did flower arrangements for the dedication.



HERB AND FRAGRANCE GARDEN AT SHELTON HISTORY COMPLEX

Members of the Olde Ripton Garden Club continue to maintain this garden at the Shelton History Complex as well as work on other gardens on the grounds. The two clubs continue to work together on various community projects.

June 1983. A request was received for the dedication of the Osborne Kellogg Homestead. This is a state owned historical house that dates back to the Mid-19th century. It is on the National Registry of Historical Places. The Museum includes the white Colonial style house and grounds of the late Frances Eliza Kellogg, who died in 1956, at the age of 80. Seeking to avoid having a public housing project built on her land, through the process of eminent domain, Fannie Kellogg deeded the entire farm to the State of Connecticut for use as a public park. The stipulation in her will was that her maid could live in the house until her death. Miss Little outlived Fannie and died at the age of 101.

Restoration of the house began in 1976 keeping in mind the other stipulation in Fannie's will that "the contents of the house remain on the premises." The State build an educational environmental center on the property near the rear of the house and the remains of the property became Osborndale State Park.

The house contains the original restored furniture. Several rooms were restored to how they looked when Fannie lived there. The solarium is filled with live plants and overlooks Fannie's rose gardens and formal flower beds; some of which date back to 1911. Fannie loved flowers and they were utilized extensively in the wallpaper and draperies throughout the house.

The Olde Ripton Garden Club, working with the Ansonia Garden Club and Seymour Garden Club, was asked to decorate the house for the dedication. We were advised that this would be a spring tradition and the house would now be open for tours during the summer months on Tuesdays and Thursdays. That same year, Olde Ripton Garden Club along with the Ansonia and Seymour Clubs again decorated the house for their first open house tours at Christmas. The museum was open for the first two weeks of December.

The participating clubs were asked to decorate with fresh traditional Christmas greens which were provided by the museum staff and included a live spruce tree. They were to add fresh holly and other natural greens and accessories, keeping the main décor and the fine imported English china collection as presented. All twelve rooms of the house were decorated by the three participating garden clubs - a big task for only three clubs.



GARDEN AT PLUMB MEMORIAL LIBRARY

In 1985 a letter was received from Plumb Memorial Library thanking the garden club for their efforts in beautifying the library grounds and the children's room and notifying the Olde Ripton Garden Club that there will be no fee for the use of the meeting room in the future as a gesture of appreciation. We are very grateful that this practice continues today.

1986. The Club had reached its 10 year anniversary and had become a very active community organization; they worked closely with the Historical Society and Osborndale Museum, participated in Memorial Day Parades, did annual booths at Shelton Day, hosted many flower shows, maintained community gardens, and served on town committees. Popular projects were dried flower arrangements, terrariums, decoupage, lamp shades, and pictures on barn boards.

In 1987 the Olde Ripton Garden Club participated in the Bicennential Celebration for the United States Constitution in a big way. All of the flower beds which they planted and maintained each year were planted with red, white, and blue flowers. The plants consisted of: one thousand petunias, one hundred red, white, and blue salvia, two dozen red and white begonias, seventy impatiens, and two dozen red geraniums. They were planted at Huntington Green, City Hall, Plumb Library, Police Station, the triangle at Route 108, and the Historical Center Complex. A major project since most of the water had to be carried from home as there were no water source at most of the gardens. It was estimated that garden club workers were carrying in approximately 150 gallons of water to the Green and the triangle at Route 108 per week. Additional plants, shrubs and several trees were planted at the Green.

On July 7, 1987, the new gazebo was dedicated on Huntington Green and during the summer concerts were held on the Green. On Thursday, September 17, 1987, the City of Shelton held a Bicentennial Celebration of the Constitution on the Green and a Charter Oak Tree was planted by the City. Also in September a certificate was received from the United States Constitution Bicentennial Commission of Connecticut, which confirmed approval and certified official recognition of our plans for a Plant a Living Legacy Program. This certificate has been mounted on a plaque and is hung permanently in the Plumb Memorial Library, Shelton.

NOTE: A water tap was finally installed on the Huntington Green in the fall of 1987.

In 1988 many shrubs and green perennial plants were planted at City Hall that would grow and fill in a large space. This would eliminate the need for so many annuals and the Club would be able to donate more time for work on Huntington Green and the Historical Complex. The Police Station no longer needed our help as the police were maintaining the garden on their own.

The Club had always opened all of its meetings with the reading of a poem. In 1989 the Pledge of Allegiance was recited in addition to the poem. Starting the meeting with the pledge continues to this day, however, we have eliminated the poetry reading. Recycling has begun in Shelton and it was decided that Olde Ripton Garden Club should take on the job of educating the public about this.

At the June 1992 meeting of the Olde Ripton Garden Club, President Julia Adams presented a plant to all the members to place in their gardens “in memory of our departed members.” In a few weeks those plants would also be in her memory.

In July 1992, Julia Adams was killed in an automobile accident. A person who had worked tirelessly for the Club for the past sixteen years, doing probably every job in the Club, including serving her second term as president at the time of her death, was gone. As well as being a charter member of the Olde Ripton Garden Club, Julia was also a life member of the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, a life member of the African Violet Society of America, and a charter member of the Nutmeg State African Violet Society. Julia Adams was one of the first members of the Shelton Recycling Committee as well as a member of the Conservation Committee. Julia had also begun doing horticulture therapy programs at Wesley Heights Retirement Homes of Fairfield County, and The Rehab Center in Fairfield.

An article written upon Julia’s death described how she didn’t like the dramatic changes that had overtaken Shelton in the past four decades. She didn’t like the traffic and the congestion of downtown Shelton and spoke wistfully about the 1930s. When life presented trials for her she would retreat to her basement where 400 African violets dominated the large area. There she would find peace.

The Olde Ripton Garden Club had always done arrangements for garden shows at the Burr Mansion in Fairfield. This year’s arrangement was a “Tribute to Julia Adams” and was comprised of African Violets, of course.



One other Charter Member of Olde Ripton is also a life member of the Federated Garden Club of CT, Marion Fairbanks. Marion was also Assistant Treasurer of the CT.organization.

In 1992 the Club put up a display for the newly opened Huntington Branch Library at the Community Center. A garden therapy program was also started at Wesley Heights.

In May 1994 the National Convention of State Garden Clubs took place in Stamford. Olde Ripton Garden Club members made travel jewelry cases for all of the state club presidents.

In June 1994 the Club once again made a decision that it had to limit the number of gardens that could be maintained and gave up City Hall. Work continued on the Green, Historical Complex, and Plumb Library.

The September 1994 meeting featured two speakers from a new Committee for Open Space in the City of Shelton. The Committee was a group of people from five different commissions in the City, two people from each commission who were interested in preserving land for open space. The land would be used for recreational purposes and would be known as the Shelton Land Trust. The Committee hoped to increase the amount of money that the City would allow for land acquisition, which at the time it \$100,000. The Committee wanted to see it increased to \$325,000. The portion of land that they were currently interested in was the Shelton Lakes area. All club members were asked to write letters to the governor asking for more land conservation. Connecticut had the least amount of open land per capita in the United States.

Christmas season of 1994 found the Club decorating the original wing of the Plumb Library as part of the Christmas House tour.

In 1995 a garden club member began a perennial garden at the Shelton Community Center.

1996. The Olde Ripton Garden Club is now twenty years old and a big celebration is planned, a spring wedding garden tour and flower show. Floral designs will be featured at each home and garden. Themes were The Engagement Party , The Bachelor Party, The Wedding and The Reception. Displays were set up outside and inside.

20th ANNIVERSARY GARDEN TOUR – A SPRING WEDDING



TEA IS SERVED

20th ANNIVERSARY GARDEN TOUR – A SPRING WEDDING



Shelton Land Trust requested that Charter Member Evelyn Healy speak about the referendum considering the City of Shelton acquiring about 471 acres of land to be sold by Bridgeport Hydraulic Company. Everyone was encouraged to vote YES on the referendum on June 3, 1997. A club

member has now planted a perennial garden at the Community Center Entrance. The City of Shelton requested that as a one time project the Club plant flowers in 8 barrels in the city.

December wreath making was becoming more difficult because of the huge amounts of greens needed. Sources were no longer available at the Hydraulic Company. Wire frames had to be collected for reuse and discussions began about eliminating the project.

In early 1998 at a monthly meeting a workshop was held on making flower corsages. It was decided that these corsages would be delivered to a local nursing home. Members worked very hard; the corsages turned out beautifully and the residents of Shelton Lakes loved them. While members were at the nursing home they were asked about the possibility of a garden therapy program at the facility. The idea was received with much enthusiasm and monthly therapy programs were presented at that facility for the next two years.

In 1999 it was determined that the garden at the gazebo had become an eyesore and needed to be re-landscaped. The City Parks Department agreed and voted that funds would be available to help with the project. Early on a Saturday morning in June eight members of the Olde Ripton Garden Club dug and planted: 6 2 foot Alberta Spruce, 2 red azaleas, 6 white azaleas, 2 pink astilbe, 4 Stella D'oro, and 1 rhododendron. By the end of the summer the rhododendron had died and a laurel that the club had planted on the Green some years ago was planted in its place.

The Historical Society had removed the Curtis Fountain at the Green to be restored. The Club donated \$450 toward this restoration project.

For the December 2000 wreath making meeting ready made wreaths were purchased and decorated with all natural materials and delivered throughout the City to schools and city buildings. Utilizing ready made wreaths required less time and fewer greens which had become more difficult to obtain.

September 2001. Olde Ripton Garden Club was represented at the Millennium Tree Committee. The plan was to plant one thousand trees by March in time for Arbor Day. The Club

donated \$275 to the Millennium Tree Committee for a white oak tree, which has a possible 100 year lifetime growth. One was planted at the Farmer's Market.

In 2003 a bake table was added to the plant sale which was still held in May, but now in the Congregational Church parking lot.

In 2003 a new garden was added to the Olde Ripton Garden Club's list of continuing community gardens— the main entrance sign at Shelton High School.

In the spring of 2003 we decided to have our annual plant sale be a two day event and take place at the back of the Community Center. The main

advantage to having the sale at this location would be that there would be more people coming in and out of the center and there would be a large amount of parking available. The two day sale was not a good idea, made especially worse as it rained very hard and all the plants and tables, etc. had to be moved and set up again the following morning.



In July 2003, the Garden Club received a call from the director of the new Ripton Apartments, an elderly housing project in downtown Shelton requesting our help in decorating the main entrance and the five floor reception areas. After touring the facility to see what was needed, the Club scheduled a special workshop and made dried flower arrangements and wreaths. Additional plants were purchased and a decorating committee of 10 members visited the facility and decorated tables, floors and walls. In December live wreaths were also delivered to the facility.

In November of 2003, Charter Member Claire Norris received the Mary Freng Sherley Memorial Award for excellence in horticulture from the Federated Garden Club of CT. Every year, Claire has spent many hours in the garden at Plumb Library. She is able to name any plant donated to the annual plant sale.

In 2005 – a change in how members are listed: for years the women were listed with their husbands name first:

1976 Mrs. John Doe (Ruth)

2005 Mrs. Ruth Doe (John)

2011 Ruth Doe

The Club yearbooks have become more sophisticated – gone are the hand written booklets with charming drawings. Yearbooks are more computerized and certainly more heavily detailed and illustrated but the original ones were charming.

In 2006 a request was received from Crosby Commons to set up a garden therapy program. This project began in 2007 and continues today. Each May garden club members assist the residents in planting the window boxes that decorate the facility outside in the warm months. November has them planting amarillys bulbs. Other programs are seasonal and varied.



2006 was another anniversary and the club members enjoyed a luncheon at the Blue Goose Restaurant in Stratford to celebrate their 30 years.

In 2007 the Shelton Historical Society once again joined with the Olde Ripton Garden Club, this time to create an old fashioned Christmas. The Bronson house was decorated with all natural decorations gathered from evergreen trees, dried materials and fruits and ribbons. These decorations were combined with special displays from the collections of the Historical Society. A two day Open House was held featuring an old fashioned Santa and seasonal music.

While flower shows were done almost yearly in the early club years one had not been attempted in many years. In the spring of 2008 we sponsored another wedding- themed one.

November and December 2008 were busy months for the Club. In addition to the annual wreath meeting and holiday luncheon, the Club again worked with the Shelton Historical Society decorating the Bronson house, this time for "A White Christmas." Of course Osborndale was also decorated.

In 2009 the Huntington Branch Library requested some decorating help in the rear of the Community Center outside the library window. A member's husband build a large upstanding planter and installed it. It was then filled with hostas and a large hydrangia.

In 2013 the yearly plant sale was moved to St. Paul's Church parking lot where it would be more visible from the street. As an addition to our monthly meeting programs, a report on an invasive plant was presented by a different member each month. In following years we did native plants, insects, and butterflies. The Club participated in the Federated Garden Club's project of creating native habitats and 12 members had their yards become Certified Wildlife Habitats.

A new garden was added to our community garden list; the post office entrance at the Shelton Community Center. We now have gardens at the High School Designation Sign, Plumb Library, the Shelton History Complex, and 2 gardens at the Community Center, all are planted and maintained by individual members. Huntington Green is a group project with members signing up for weeks of watering and maintaining the gardens throughout the summer.

A new meeting schedule was established in 2014. There are now no meetings in January and February, however, we do meet in July and August. In 2014 a massive tree trimming project was begun in the state by the utility companies. The club wrote city leaders and met with them and the utility company workers to voice our concerns over the condition in which the trees were left; all branches trimmed off of one side of the trees and stumps and branches left by the roadside. Well, we tried but nothing much changed. Concerns over loss of power were more important.

In September of 2015 a native oak tree was planted at Lane Street Nature Trail. This project was done with the assistance of the Federated Garden Club of CT and in partnership with the Shelton Land Trust. The oak is our state and national tree and the best tree for supporting local wildlife.



Also in September new shrubs were planted at the Green in the millstone garden, an area that gets a lot of traffic during summer concerts and needed replanting with more substantial shrubs. A city worker helped with the planting.

2016 Olde Ripton Garden Club has formed a special anniversary committee to plan celebrations throughout the year. One of the first things on the agenda was to select a flower that would be appropriate for a City of Shelton flower. The flower that was chosen was the *Rudbeckia fulgida*, orange coneflower. It is a native perennial plant, easy to grow, and blooms from midsummer through the fall. It is attractive to birds, bees and many pollinators that are needed by our gardens. The large flower is named for its orange-tinged petals which are in keeping with Shelton School's colors. Our selection was presented to the Shelton Board of Aldermen and on Thursday, February 11, 2016, an announcement and proclamation was made by the City Board of Aldermen designating the "Orange Coneflower" as the city of Shelton's official flower. The flower will be planted in gardens throughout the city maintained by the Olde Ripton Garden Club at Huntington Green, the Community Center, the libraries, Shelton High School, and the Shelton History Complex. Hopefully, we will see this lovely flower all throughout the City of Shelton and plan a contest for the best uses of the flower.



We have chosen "Growing Together" as our theme for our anniversary year. A fitting theme as that is exactly what we are doing, not only in growing our gardens at home and throughout our City, but also growing in knowledge of our environment, and community, and also growing in friendship.

Other anniversary year plans include a special member luncheon in June and a garden tour in July. Plans for the spring of 2016 include the replanting of the gazebo area on Huntington Green. Many of the shrubs have died and considerable work needs to be done in this challenging area.

A little background information about the Huntington Green: At one point the Green had an iron fence around it with four turnstiles – one at the Congregational Church, one at the corner of Nichols Ave and Church Street, one at Buckingham’s Store and one at the carriage shed at the east end of the Green. The fountain was dedicated on August 25, 1895, and was given by Mrs. Julia deForest Nash in memory of her father Charles Curtis. The fountain was a symbol of the hardiness of the people who had settled in the area and shows a jaguar with a fierce grip on a figure on horseback. The spring for the water was piped down Ripton Road.



The following garden clubs will be decorating for the holiday season at Osborndale in December of 2016: Derby Garden Club, The Garden Club of Orange, Long Hill Garden Club, Naugatuck Garden Club, Oxford Garden Club, Pomperaug Valley Garden Club of Woodbury, The Roxbury Bridgewater Garden Club, Women Redefining Retirement – Milford, Ye Olde Kellogg Garden Club and Olde Ripton Garden Club. Ten clubs and Olde Ripton Garden Club is the only one of the original three clubs still participating.

And so the Olde Ripton Garden Club continues on – hopefully adding some positive things to the city where we live and work. There are so many new projects that could be done around our town and we need more new members to continue the work. Project possibilities include some garden projects in downtown Shelton, youth gardening with schools or scout groups, more educational programs for the public, and other community projects.