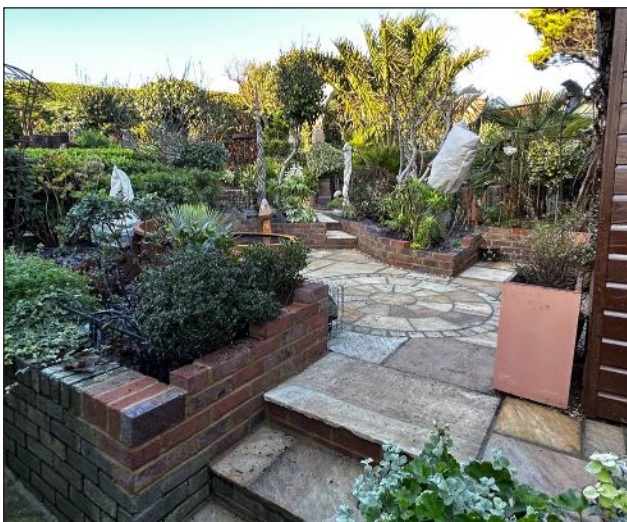


The Driftwood Garden Diary

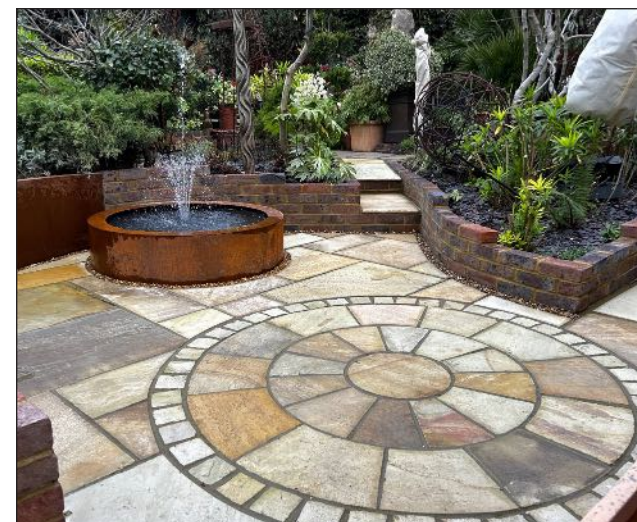
with Geoff Stonebanks



The area stripped ready for landscaping



The entrance to the new area



Corten steel fountain

Dramatic new look is complete

I'VE been mentioning the latest project in my garden in recent weeks and can now confirm it is all complete. I'm extremely pleased with the final product.

I spent a long time through the summer months deciding what I wanted the area to look like and sketched out how I saw it in my mind's eye.

I'm extremely lucky to have been able to use a local landscaper, who has worked with me on the garden many times in recent years, to bring my drawings to life.

After the final visitors had been to the garden, at the beginning of September, I began to clear the area around the pond, which was a combination of several large containers and many plants in the ground.

There were also four smaller trickling ponds down into the large pond which needed to come out too.

It was quite hard work to get everything prepared as you can see in the picture.

I managed to recycle some of the larger containers that I no longer needed, collected for free, to be used in someone else's garden.

All the plants that were temporarily removed were carefully potted up to be put back into the final planting scheme.

Both the landscaper and I were amazed at the resulting empty space once the work had been completed.

There had been many large decorative stones and boulders incorporated in the area which I carefully put to one side, intending to place them in a steel gabion (cage) in the new look.

Regular readers will perhaps remember that I had an Indian sandstone circle laid as part of the patio with the railway sleepers last autumn, so I opted to have a small circle included here too, for continuity.

To complement the circle, I invested a large sum to purchase a 1.2 metre diameter corten steel raised pond to replace the sunken one, now filled in.

It looks pretty amazing as you can see with the old pond fountain now installed within.

In addition to the steel pond, I purchased a curved corten steel

wall which you can see behind which came all the way from The Netherlands.

In the summer, large fern fronds will be rising above it, which I'm sure will look quite magical.

Either side of the steel wall, brickwork completes the edging, holding back the planting, as the garden is on a slope.

The overall aim of changing this, and other parts of the garden, is to help make the plot much easier to maintain in my advancing years.

Much of the area will contain drought-tolerant plants and will be dressed through the summer months with succulents, transferred here from their winter homes in the greenhouse and porch.

I opted to establish two steps between the area and the centre of the garden, where previously the trickling ponds had been.

The traffic movement for visitors through the garden has always been tight, with one way up and down, this new path will make such a difference, making it much easier to get around for both visitors and myself.

I had previously allowed lots of growth around the shed in order to conceal it.

The grape vine still remains across the top of the shed but all the ivy that had been at the base has now gone and a new metal bench will be purchased in the spring to finish the look, sitting inside the two large rectangular containers.

It had been quite a big job ahead of the new work to get the shed repaired as the panels were rotting due to damage done rodents eating through in the winter and the ivy causing damage.

I got someone in to repair it for me last month and varnish it again so that now it looks as good as new once again.

Two of the most commented plants in the garden have always been the large gunnera, both were in containers, by the pond area.

I have now incorporated them in the new look, with a very large sunken container behind the brick wall (no one will see it, as I have edged it in stones but the container



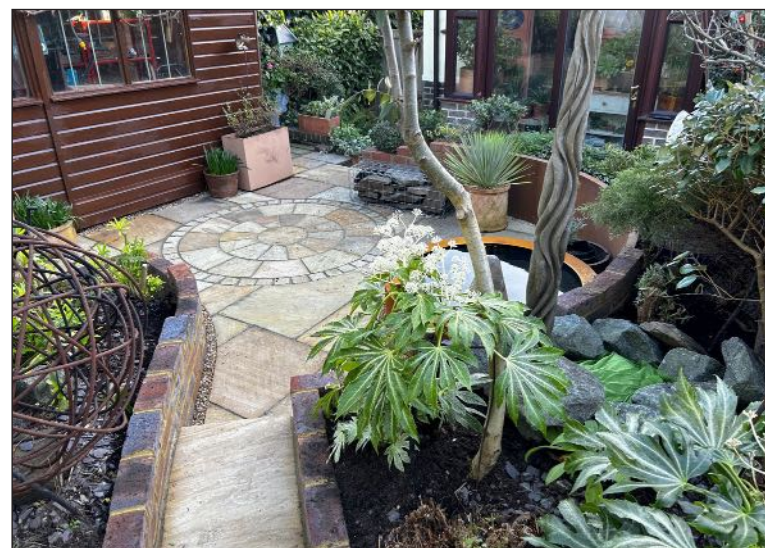
Geoff with his new pond and fountain

will stop the plant growing too big), the other was in a large blue ceramic pot which has now been moved across the space, close to the ferns, behind the steel wall.

Their fabulous architectural leaves will look quite magnificent, rising up dramatically, suspended over the steel pond.

Some of my garden sculpture has already been positioned around the area, like the gorgeous wooden carved feature, to my right in the main image but there will be much more on display again once it all come out of the summer house next spring in readiness to open on June 1.

Read more of Geoff's garden at www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk and read about his Christmas decorations on page 3



The view from the centre of garden