

# THE SPADE

THE SUMMER EDITION 2025 - ISSUE 71

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# THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF GARDENERS

## UPCOMING DAIRY DATES

DATE	EVENT	VENUE AND INFORMATION
Tuesday 9 to Saturday 13 September	Dublin and County Wicklow	An overseas visit to explore the beautiful gardens of Dublin and County Wicklow, including an optional visit to Lambay Island.
Thursday 18 September 2025	City Gardens tour	A tour of some famous and lesser-known gardens here in the City of London, led by SPM Nick Evans.
Monday 29 September 2025	Common Hall Election of the Lord Mayor	Eligible Liverymen only. Guildhall, business attire. Ticket holders will be able to attend an optional lunch after the election – venue TBC.
Monday 6 October 2025	Howbury Hall	A visit to the late Victorian garden of Howbury Hall, including a flower-arranging demonstration and workshop, and lunch.
Sunday 12 October 2025	Harvest Festival	We will join the congregation of our home church, St Giles' Cripplegate, for their Sunday service. Followed by an optional lunch. Business attire.
Wednesday 5 November 2025	Autumn Dinner	We will be joined by the Company's prize winners and their tutors. Vintners' Hall, black tie.
Monday 17 November 2025	Company Catch-up	An online meeting, hosted by the Master. Featuring a guest speaker and a chance to hear the latest news about the Company and to ask questions.
Friday 12 December 2025	Christmas Carol Service	A beautiful service of readings and music to mark the festive season, taking place at St Giles' Cripplegate and followed by a reception. Business attire.
Monday 15 December 2025	Tradescant Lunch	The annual Court-only lunch. Ironmongers' Hall, business attire.
Monday 12 January 2026	Company Catch-up	An online meeting, hosted by the Master. Featuring a guest speaker and a chance to hear the latest news about the Company and to ask questions.
Friday 6 February 2026	Annual Banquet	The centrepiece of the Company year, our Mansion House Banquet is a glittering occasion where we are joined by guests from the civic City and the horticulture industry. White tie preferred / black tie acceptable.

THE MASTER  
Alderman Robert Howard

RENTER WARDEN  
Robert Ivison

SPADE EDITOR  
Garry Coward-Williams

UPPER WARDEN  
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# A MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

My year of office as Master has just come to an end and the time has flown by, just as my predecessors told me it would. It has been an honour and a privilege to be the Master of the Company

### Highlights of the year

I hope you have all enjoyed the year as much as I have and have found the various activities and events both worthwhile and fun. I have been pondering what I should highlight in this, my final message to you, and this has proved quite a challenge - there is so much to choose from. Here is just a small selection.

### Membership growth

The recruitment campaign which is so important for the Company's future has gone well and the Company now has nearly 50 new members, including a number of new Young Gardeners. However, membership recruitment is never 'job done' so do please continue to propose candidates for membership. I am delighted that the Company now has four trade association members: the Horticultural Trades Association, the Garden Industry Manufacturers Association, the International Association of Horticultural Producers and the British Association of Landscape Industries. And there are more in the pipeline. They will, I am sure, help to strengthen the Company's links with the horticultural sector.

### Raising Company profile within City

The efficiency of the Company office has increased very significantly, thanks to the hard work and 21st century tech skills of our Clerk, Ollie Finn, and members have benefited greatly from this. The work to raise the Company's profile in the City has borne fruit, not least through the successful networking event with the City Corporation's Natural Environment

Board, the Company's support for the Big Curry Lunch and the stronger links forged with a number of Livery companies including the Plumbers, the Needlemakers, the Apothecaries, the Fruiterers, the Tin Plate Workers and the Wax Chandlers. On 24 June the Upper Warden, the Clerk and I were pleased to attend Mansion House to present the Lord and Lady Mayoress with a basket of locally sourced fruit and vegetables. This was generously provided by SPM Nicholas Evans and a photograph of this very happy event is below. The Company is very fortunate that Alderman Robert Howard is our new Master, and he will, I know, continue the important work of strengthening and highlighting our role in the City.

### Education highlights

The Company's significant work in promoting education in horticulture in a number of ways has proceeded apace and I would like to mention in particular the terrific activities of the School Outreach team and its very successful Livery Schools Link day (see article on pages 12-13).

### A feast of visits

Throughout the year there were many trips and visits presenting a wide variety of serious horticultural study as well as opportunities for fun and friendship. Examples included a visit to the Hurlingham Club Gardens and Heritage Rooms, a trip to the Holland Park Ecology Centre followed by a visit to Holland Park Opera, a tour of the vineyard operation at Chapel Down in Kent followed by a wine tasting, a visit

to Wimbledon All England Lawn Tennis Club, and visits to a number of fabulous gardens in Kent, the New Forest and Herefordshire.

### Home of Linnaeus

The trip to Sweden was a great success. We were able to see not only where Carl Linnaeus lived and worked but a number of other houses and gardens. I don't think any of us on the trip will forget seeing the open ore iron mines in Uppland and the conditions in which the iron was forged in the past. Amongst various treats, we all enjoyed a performance on a nyckelharpa; a traditional Swedish musical instrument which seemed to be part large violin/ part hurdy-gurdy.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very happy time in the ensuing year and to thank you for the opportunity to be Master for the year.

**Cindy Peck, Master**





# THE INSTALLATION DINNER

This key event in our Company calendar was held in the sumptuous setting of the Merchant Taylors Hall, writes Gillian Taylor

**Glorious location**

First built on this site in 1347 the fabric of the building has survived both plague and fire. The Great Hall has been used for over 700 years, providing a glorious location with its magnificent mahogany panelling, stained glass windows and, unusually, an organ. The soft colours of the beautifully prepared flower arrangements, courtesy of Liveryman Stephen Crisp, provided a gentle contrast and added to the atmosphere of the venue.

**Lord Mayor’s speech**

Meeting for drinks in the Courtyard, members were delighted to receive a short address from The Right Honourable Lord Mayor, Alderman Alastair King. A close friend of the new Master, Alderman Robert Howard, the Lord Mayor apologised for not being able to stay for the whole evening. He congratulated the Master on his appointment and wished him well during his term of office.

**Fourth generation Liveryman**

The entry of the top table party was accompanied by stirring organ music, a fitting start to this special occasion. Thanking Cindy Peck, Immediate Past Master, for her hard work, the Master acknowledged that the Company is in a good position to face future challenges. As a fourth generation Liveryman the Master is keenly aware of his new responsibilities and intends to build on past achievements, while also looking to strengthen collaboration with the Horticultural industry in the future.

**Worthy awards**

Newly clothed Liverymen were welcomed by the assembly. They were Margaret Hanna, Victoria Inglis, Deborah Pullen and Andrew Peck. There was also an opportunity to acknowledge one of our Company for her outstanding contribution to Livery life, as she received the Company Medal. Marjorie Dowbiggin has given dedicated support to the Flowers in the City campaign for many years. The citation included her work as Honorary Secretary, being part of a judging team and a key coordinator of FITC events. The Master was delighted to present the award to such a worthy recipient.

**Welcoming the guests**

The Loyal Toasts were followed by Assistant Robert Merrett who proposed a toast to all the guests. Those he mentioned by name included Fran Barnes, Chief Executive of the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), Nava Castro Dominguez, Mayor of Pontearias, Dr Julia Neild, Master Apothecary and Professor Carolyn Roberts, Master Water Conservator. He thanked them for representing the essential elements for successful gardening: the plants themselves, the culture that celebrates them, the knowledge to use them wisely and the water that sustains them. The presence of His Excellency Ferenc Kumin, the Hungarian Ambassador was noted and then the Company toasted all sixty eight guests.

**Guest’s response**

Fran Barnes responded on behalf of the guests. She spoke eloquently and with passion about her journey in the world of horticulture. Emphasising the importance of horticulture as a means to improve both the environment and people’s lives, she hoped that future generations would not live in a world without access to green space and the opportunity to grow plants. The HTA provides a ‘living voice’ for its 1400 businesses and ‘Keeps Britain Gardening’.

**Welcoming first trade members**

The Master’s speech affirmed his recognition of the Company’s commitment to some fundamental values. In his view these are embedded in the WCOG and include: Education,

Charity, Fellowship, Tradition, Energy, Friendship and Conviviality. He was also delighted to announce that, at such a pivotal time for the industry, the first Trade Body members are joining the Company. These are the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), the Garden Industry Manufacturers Association (GIMA), the International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH) and the British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI). The Master hoped that this new collaboration will allow exploration of new areas where the Company can offer their help within the world of horticulture.

**Exciting event programme**

The Events Committee, under the Chairmanship of Philippa Burrough, has been working hard to produce an exciting and varied programme for the Master’s tenure; look out for details on our web page, the Year Book and of course, The Spade. The new Warden team was introduced to the assembly: Upper Warden : David Balfour, Renter Warden: Bob Ivison, Spade Bearer: Jonathan Matheson. We have a new Finance Officer, Georgina Faulkner. Attending her first Livery event, she made herself known to the audience and received a warm response.

**Perfect ending**

The evening ended with a Stirrup Cup. We owe a debt of gratitude to the team at Merchant Taylors Hall provided seamless service and the modern air conditioning, surprisingly present in such an ancient building, was much appreciated by all.



The unique ambience of 700-year-old The Merchant Taylor’s Great Hall was the perfect setting for the Installation Dinner



Master Robert Howard, receives his chain of office from the IPM Cindy Peck



Jonathan Matheson is delighted to be the new Spadebearer at Installation



The Lord Mayor, Alderman Alastair King addressed The Gardeners’ in the courtyard



Heather Barrett-Mold and Simon Catford with Fran Barnes, Chief Executive of the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA)



Upper Warden David Balfour and Zoe Jasko



Renter Warden Bob Ivison and his wife Teresa



The Master, Alderman Robert Howard and his Consort, Lady Magdalen Howard





# THE GARDENERS' AT RHS CHELSEA SHOW

Members of the Gardeners' Company are regular attendees on the exclusive Press Day of the world's most prestigious flower show and this year was no exception

The RHS Chelsea Flower Show is a unique event and the first day is only open to the world's press, the great and good of the horticultural world, countless celebrities and of course, his Majesty, The King. It is the day when TV cameramen vie to capture the legions of celebrities that 'peacock' around in the hope to be seen and reported on, when the amazing show gardens are judged and winners announced. This year, as well as the likes of Judy Dench, Joanna Lumley and that chap off the TV baking programme, there were a number of Gardeners' Company members quietly going about their business. Here are the thoughts of some who attended on this special day.

### The President's lunch

On Press Day, the President of the RHS holds an exclusive lunch and the current Master Gardener is always invited. This year our Master, Cindy Peck was joined by two other Gardeners': Paul Rochford in his capacity as a Trustee of Perennial and Baroness Fookes. Master Cindy Peck commented: "Many of the great and the good in the horticultural

world were represented throughout the day and I was able to meet many members and friends of the Company. It turned out to be a very useful and most enjoyable networking event".

**Clematis named after a Baroness**  
Liveryman Baroness Fookes said: "My visit to the Chelsea Flower Show on Press Day this year was very special as I made my way to the exhibit belonging to the Guernsey Clematis Nursery. Its owner, Raymond Evison, has been a good friend for many years. Some time ago he gave me the chance to select one of several new varieties he was developing and to allow it to be named Baroness Fookes. It had gone through many stages before being regarded as a candidate, needing several years to develop as a commercial proposition. So the day it was on display at Chelsea was truly a wonderful one for me. The crowning moment was being presented with one by Raymond himself."

**Barbara Segall's favourite garden**  
Barbara chose The Newt in Somerset's Karoo Succulent Garden installation as her star of the show. The garden was

a collaboration between The Newt in Somerset (Sponsor of RHS Chelsea) and its South African sister estate, Babylonstoren. Barbara said: "The Karoo is a special landscape in reality and in my memory as I grew up in South Africa. It is the natural habitat for the many resilient and indigenous succulents that thrive in these rock formations. The garden offered lessons on the relationship between varying rock types and how the succulents adapted to survive and thrive. It also revealed how important micro-climates can be for plants."

### View from America

Kate Barlett of Barlett's Tree, based in Connecticut, USA, has attended Chelsea as an exhibitor for many years, she said: "The Japanese gardens were especially memorable, offering a sense of calm and restraint. Vibrant red Japanese maples contrasted beautifully with soft green mosses, while raked gravel and still water features encouraged quiet reflection. The terrace gardens were another success, creatively using vertical space and layered planting to show the potential of compact urban landscapes".



The Master, Cindy Peck with RHS President Keith Weed outside the Royal Hospital Chelsea



Raymond Evison presents Baroness Fookes with the new clematis that bears her name



The beautiful clematis created by Raymond Evison and named for Baroness Janet Fookes



Paul Rochford, The Master Cindy Peck and Baroness Fookes at the RHS President's lunch



Cornell Beukes, Horticulturist at Babylonstoren, Barbara Segall and Ernst van Jaarsveld, the Master Botanist at Babylonstoren



Megan Kacenski, Vice President of Corporate Relations for Bartlett Tree, Kate Bartlett and Garry Coward-Williams on the Bartlett stand

# HORT INDUSTRY URGES GOVERNMENT TO REMOVE VAT ON SUNSCREEN



Leading horticulture industry organisations have submitted a joint letter to the UK Government, calling for the removal of VAT on SPF 30+ sunscreen for horticultural professionals

### ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY:

- 39%** Of men use sunscreen regularly, compared to 74% of women
- 30%** Of sunscreen users rarely or never reapply it during the workday
- 87%** Of respondents believe sunscreen should be VAT exempt
- 92%** Said they would use sunscreen more frequently if the cost dropped by 20%

A coalition of leading horticulture and landscape industry organisations has today announced the submission of a joint letter to the UK Government calling for the removal of VAT on SPF 30+ sunscreen

### Alarming rates of skin cancer

The joint letter sent by the leading horticulture industry organisations follows a revealing survey by the Chartered Institute of Horticulture (CIH) and Plant Network, highlighting the alarming rates of skin cancer in the sector and the economic barriers to adequate sun protection.

### 700 professionals surveyed

The survey, completed by over 700 professionals working across horticulture and landscaping sectors found that 12% of respondents had been diagnosed with skin cancer, with men and those with paler skin tones disproportionately affected. Notably, 71% reported being sunburned at least once per year, despite high awareness of the risks.

### Health protection, not luxury

The letter calls on the Government to reclassify SPF 30+ sunscreen as essential health protection, rather than a cosmetic luxury, and to remove the 20% VAT currently applied under

tax code 3304 9900 00. This change, the signatories argue, would make sunscreen more affordable for the UK's outdoor workforce, increasing uptake and reducing the incidence of skin cancer.

### Chartered Institute of Horticulture

Jason Daff, Secretary of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture, commented: "It is unacceptable that a basic and effective form of occupational health protection is treated as a luxury item. This is a preventable health crisis that can be addressed with a simple policy change. We urge the Government to act."

### What the RHS say

Dr Tim Upson, Director of Gardens and Horticulture RHS, commented: "Employers spend considerable time ensuring that those working outdoors are as safe as possible, providing advice, protection and planning work to avoid overexposure. A VAT exemption would greatly support employers in making sunscreen more readily available to protect everyone who works in the trade."

### What the HTA say

Fran Barnes, Chief Executive, Horticultural Trades Association, commented: "As the trade body representing horticulture and landscaping businesses across the UK, the HTA and its specialist group, the Association of Professional Landscapers, strongly support the initiative to remove VAT from SPF 30+ sunscreen. Our members employ thousands of outdoor workers who face daily exposure to the sun. The change would better enable businesses and workers to achieve better health outcomes, while reducing avoidable long-term strain on the NHS."

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**Leading skin cancer charity, Melanoma Focus estimates that removing VAT from sunscreen could save the NHS over £128 million annually, nearly double the projected £67 million in lost VAT revenue**



**AUTUMN DINNER - WEDNESDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER**  
**Vintners' Hall**  
**Black tie, please see company website to book your place.**



# THE REGENERATION OF FINSBURY CIRCUS

The garden at Finsbury Circus has been redesigned and rebuilt with its official opening by the Lord Mayor on the 4th June, writes Heather Barrett-Mold and Jake Tibbets

**Unique City of London space**

Finsbury Circus, at two acres, is the largest public open space in the City of London, and as such, is managed and maintained by the City Corporation City Gardens Team. Previously, the central section of the garden was taken up due to the excavation of Crossrail, which runs directly underneath the central part of the garden.

**Design challenges**

This excavation led to a completely new design and build with a number of major difficulties such as the large plane trees that border the garden with longstanding roots. The new design and planting have incorporated sustainable urban drainage systems to prepare for increased levels of flooding, while the plane trees provide welcome shade in the increasing summer heat. The shade is not too extensive and there is plenty of planting in more open areas that supports pollinating insects. The landscape designers have acknowledged in their design so much of the history of this greenspace, such as the grey Kent ragstone which gives a nod to the London Wall.

**A places of many uses**

In his speech at the opening ceremony, Jake Tibbets, who heads up City Gardens, said: *“We are standing in Finsbury Circus... nestled in the heart of the City, and arguably the oldest used space for public recreation in the capital. A place that has been marshland, burial ground, dumping ground, a place of refuge, a place for sports, for drying clothes.*

*And today... a carefully tended garden surrounded by the city's ever-changing skyline.”*

**Marshy cemetery**

The history of the Circus is fascinating: during construction of 12–15 Finsbury Circus archaeologists uncovered evidence of prehistoric human activity here, including an Iron Age burial site. When the Romans arrived, they used this area — outside the protective city wall — as a cemetery from the late first to mid-second century. The wall partially dammed the River Walbrook, creating a marshy landscape. That marsh — or fen — gave us the name ‘Fens-bury.’ For much of the medieval period, there are not many records. The city expanded westward, not north. This area, on the wrong side of the wall, became a dumping ground. But in 1173, Moorfields — as this larger area was known — was granted to the City *“for the ease of the citizens,”* by a wealthy widow, just before the Norman Conquest. From then on, sporadic attempts were made to drain and reclaim it.

**Lord Mayor effects positive change**

In 1211, a 60-metre-wide ditch was dug as a defensive measure, but also to help drain the marsh. In 1411, the Lord Mayor ordered a cleanup and built Moor Gate to allow access for Londoners seeking open space. The area slowly began to change. It was used for drying laundry, for archery practice, for grazing cattle — and even for ice skating in winter when

the water froze. But drainage remained a constant struggle. Brick clay was dug from the area, and the holes left filled with stagnant water. In 1606, a major turning point came. Ten acres of land were finally drained, planted with trees, and laid out with gravel paths and benches. This is where its claim as London’s first public park originates. King James I praised the city for its effort to beautify the area for the benefit of his subjects.

**From the Great Fire to ‘Bedlam’**

The city made its expectations very clear — stocks were erected for anyone who dumped rubbish or relieved themselves in the park. Fast forward to 1666, and after the Great Fire of London, displaced citizens set up temporary shelters here. Then, in 1676, the second Bethlehem Hospital — known to most as Bedlam — was built on the southern edge of Finsbury Circus. It was the country’s first purpose-built mental hospital, it was located here so the residents could look out on the park and enjoy the fresh air, but being poorly built on unstable ground it was eventually demolished in 1814.

**The ‘London Amphitheatre’**

Then a plan to transform the area into a residential suburb. Between 1775 and 1800, George Dance the Younger, the City Surveyor, who was also responsible for Mansion House and the front of the Guildhall, envisioned a formal oval garden, surrounded by elegant neoclassical houses. He called

it the ‘London Amphitheatre,’ and so the boundary of the garden one can see today was formed. The garden was for private use, reserved for residents — many of whom were doctors, surgeons, and wealthy professionals. The Royal Ophthalmic Hospital moved here in 1822. And the London Institution, a major library and educational centre, opened on the north side of the circus, dedicated to ‘the advancement of literature and diffusion of useful knowledge.’

**Commerce takes over**

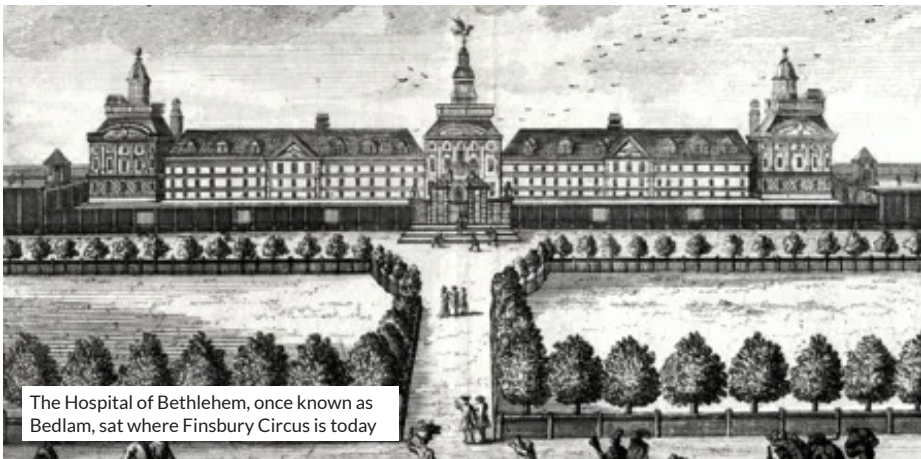
But by the late 19th century, things shifted again. Rising rents drove out the residents and medical professionals. The Royal Ophthalmic Hospital moved to City Road — and became what we now know as Moorfields Eye Hospital. All of the houses were demolished and made way for businesses including the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, which would later become BP. Salisbury House, built in 1898, designed to house companies trading in the gold and diamond industries, was at the time the tallest office block in London.

**Railway terminus rejection**

The garden remained private — but not untouched. In 1863, it was nearly lost to the Metropolitan Railway, which wanted to build a terminus here. A petition to the House of Lords successfully stopped it, although the railway was eventually allowed to build tunnels beneath the garden — on condition that the trees were preserved and the garden restored and an annual maintenance fee of £100 paid for evermore.

**Garden goes public**

As the area became increasingly commercial, pressure grew to make what was now a very underused garden



a public one. The City began pushing for it to be opened up to the public. In 1901, the City of London (Various Powers) Bill passed through Parliament. Not everyone was happy — the librarian of the London Institution objected, he declared that if the gardens were open to the public, students and others would be subject to disturbance and annoyance. But his argument didn’t convince the committee.

**Rain nearly stops play**

And so, on the 25th of July, 1901, Finsbury Circus Garden was officially opened to the public by the Lord Mayor of London — though not without drama. A newspaper at the time reported a violent thunderstorm and wrote: *“When the place was reached rain fell so heavily that the ceremony as arranged could not possibly be carried out, and the Lord Mayor made his dedicatory speech from the shelter of his carriage, to the accompaniment of deafening peels from overhead.”* Soon after, two fountains were installed. In 1925, a bowling green was added after a public petition.

**Practical war use**

During World War II, the garden served as allotments and air raid shelters. The

railings were removed as part of the war effort. In 1955, a bandstand was added. In 1985, a garden pavilion was turned into a wine bar.

**Crossrail tunnel**

And in 2010, the garden was closed yet again: this time for a different kind of tunnel. Crossrail, now the Elizabeth Line, needed a shaft here to build the new Liverpool Street station. For more than a decade, the garden was behind hoardings. But when the work was completed, and the site handed back, the City launched a design competition resulting in this beautiful garden in its new form: a beautiful, tranquil, biodiverse space, that has climate resilient planting and looks forward to the future.

**And now...**

This brings us up to date: In 2025, a space that has been many things: a burial site, a marsh, a park, a dumping ground, a hospital, a construction site, a place of recreation and of beauty. Finsbury Circus is not just a garden. It is a living layer of London’s past and a reminder that even in the oldest corners of the city, change is constant, and history is never far beneath our feet.





# POLLINATING LONDON TOGETHER

## An update on its achievements and future plans

This year marks Pollinating London Together's (PLT) fifth anniversary; a milestone that reflects how far we have come since our inception, writes Heather Barrett-Mold.

### Growing number of partners

We started work in early 2020 along with the Wax Chandlers. Since then our membership has grown to 67 livery companies and 16 corporate and non-profit organisations, including the Chelsea Physic Garden and Historic Royal Palaces. PLT is now a charity in its own right and has benefitted from two awards of funding from the City Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund (CILNF). An early Memorandum of Understanding was with the University of Reading, and this has continued to be a strength.

### Decline of pollinators

The original driver for this work was to prevent the decline of pollinators. The decline is largely due to habitat loss and the overuse of chemicals. Not only will humans feel this loss but so will birds and other animals in the food chain, not being able to feed on such insects or the fruit that they enable.

### Enhancing pollinator-friendly spaces

Flying insects have declined by 78% in the UK in the past 20 years (Ball et al. 2023), and we should not forget that one third of every mouthful we eat is dependent upon pollinators. PLT aims to champion and enhance pollinator friendly green spaces, starting in the City of London (32ha), allowing ALL pollinators, including bumble bees, butterflies, moths, bugs and beetles to thrive.

### Honey bees in The City

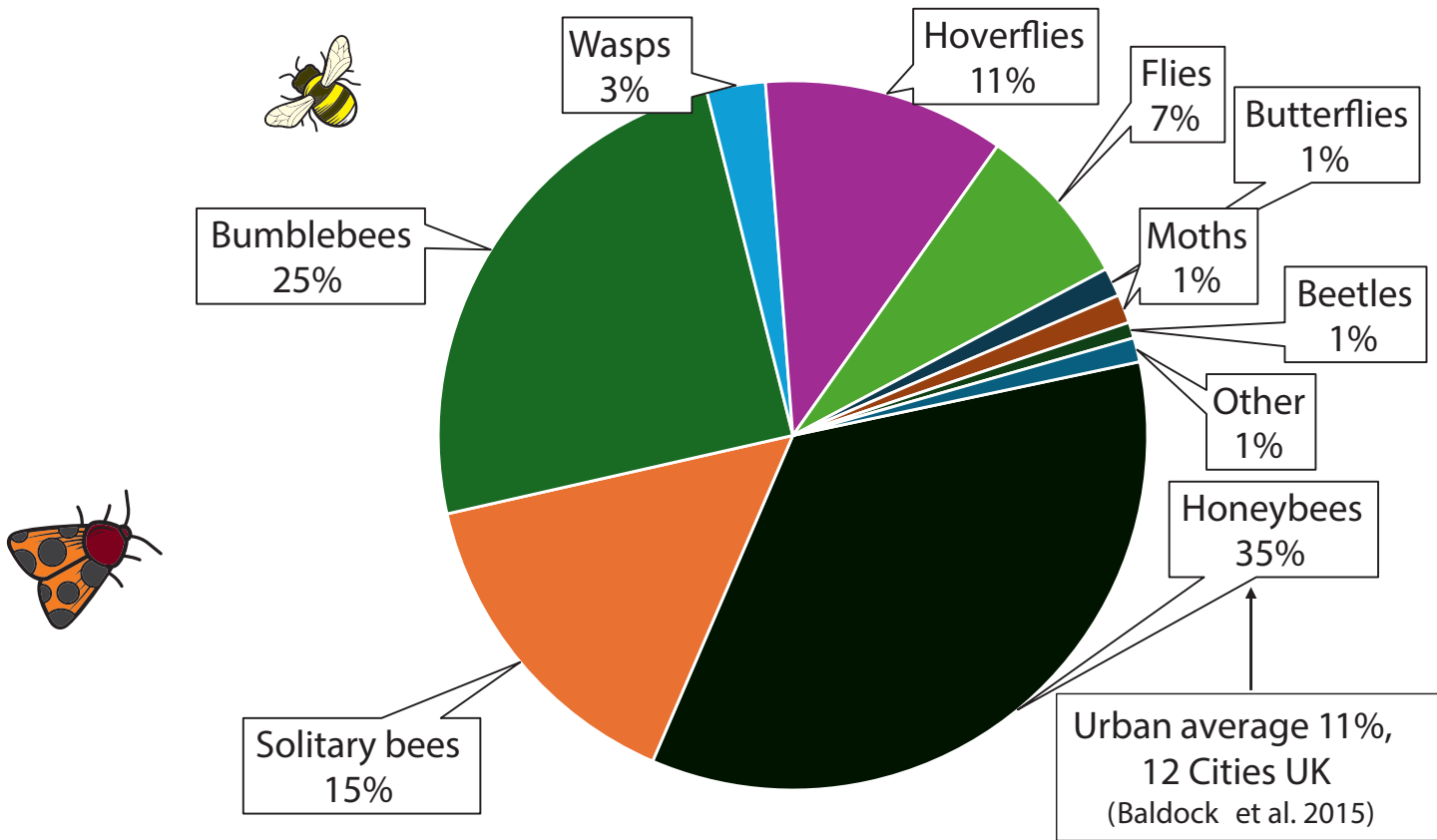
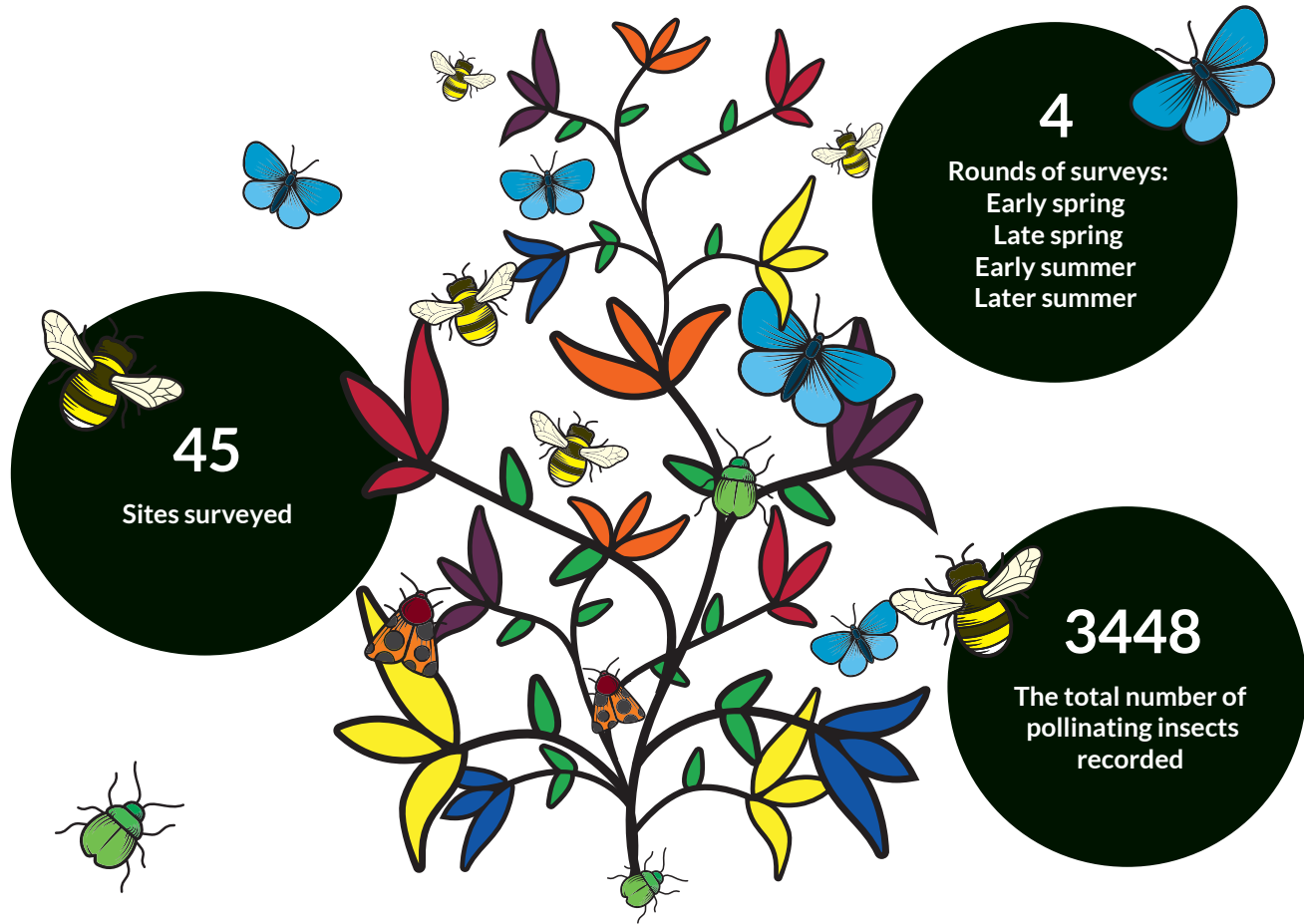
There are around 200 species of hoverfly, 59 species of butterflies and 270 species of bee in the UK but only one of those is the honey bee. Especially in the urban situation we need to be wary of a monoculture as honey bees will inevitably compete with our non-domesticated pollinators for nectar and pollen and could as a result reduce biodiversity. What PLT has found is that the prevalence of honey bees in the City is very high and much higher than would be expected in an urban area. However urban green spaces – with their ecological diversity – can be one of the most important places for pollinators because of their variety of food sources and potential nesting sites.

### Financial challenge

While our progress has been remarkable, we face a significant challenge as the CILNF grant concludes in March 2026, with no extension possible. Our current annual budget of £170,000 relies heavily on grant funding, which is not guaranteed in the future. To continue our vital work, we must build a stronger foundation of support from within our community.

## PAST YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

- Engagement with 20 out of 25 Wards within the City of London.
- Surveys of over 45 sites four times across the season, with habitat guidance given.
- Increase in the number of roof gardens.
- A survey of the impact of pollinators in greenspaces on a feeling of wellbeing.
- A programme of events to which all our members are invited – including all members of the Gardeners Company.
- Development of Guidance for Managers of Greenspace for pollinators in conjunction with the City of London Biodiversity Action Plan Group.
- Contributing to the City Plan 2024, advocating for greater diversity among pollinating insects.
- Extending our work to Islington and Camden in particular.
- Inaugural annual pollinator count and seminar, with the next to take place on the 17 th July. Seminar to take place in the Tower of London.
- Securing final year funding of £140,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund (CILNF).
- Developing and piloting educational resources in collaboration with the Trust for Sustainable Living, now being rolled out nationally.
- Establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Employment of a member of staff based in Edinburgh to use the same model as PLT.





### HOWBURY HALL - MONDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

A visit to the late Victorian garden of Howbury Hall, including a flower-arranging demonstration and workshop, and lunch.

Ball L, Whitehouse A, Bowen-Jones E, Amor M, Banfield N, Hadaway P, Hetherington P (2023)  
The Bugs Matter Citizen Science Survey, Kent Wildlife Trust.



# SCHOOLS OUTREACH TEAM... REACH OUT!



The Guildhall was the venue for the annual Livery Schools Link (LSL) event held on Tuesday 4 February 2025 and the Company's Schools Outreach Team were out in force writes Simon Catford

The Schools Outreach project is a sub-group of the Education Committee designed to open the eyes of young people to the huge range of careers available under the umbrella of horticulture, and to improve inclusiveness and diversity in the industry. As such, we engage with school pupils of different ages and backgrounds across London introducing them to the myriad of opportunities in horticulture.

## Livery support for schools

The Livery Schools Link (LSL) is a voluntary organisation set up as a charity in 2003 that aims to promote support for schools in the Greater London area by Livery Companies of the City of London and their members, helping to prepare young people for the world of work. They seek to act as the link between schools in need of help and members of the Livery who wish to offer assistance in any form. They act as a forum for the exchange of ideas and best practice in the field and maintain links with the educational community. They also run occasional events on relevant topics.

## Raising aspirations

Their mission is to assist children from less advantaged backgrounds to receive an enhanced educational experience at school and to have their personal aspirations raised, thereby increasing their employability and career options. With this in mind, the LSL was a perfect opportunity for the Gardeners' to reach out to around one thousand school children in Years 8 to 10 from a wide range of educational establishments across London. It was a busy day!

## What the Gardeners' offered

Our stand was set up in the Old Library and had a very commanding presence. To ensure engagement with young people it is essential to have a 'hook' to draw them in. Our stand did just that; a herb identification table complete with all the lovely aromas and textures that only a range of common herbs can provide and it proved very popular. We also offered a bulb planting 'masterclass' allowing our young guests to get their hands dirty and plant some Friesia bulbs to take home.

Pots, compost, bulbs and carrier bags were all provided and the children flocked to have a go. Whether any of the bulbs survived the journey home on the school bus is anyone's guess but they seemed to genuinely enjoy it.

## Flyers and giveaways

Aside from the skills, expertise and enthusiasm (!) shown by the Outreach team, also on offer were the usual stickers, pencils and promotional flyers which were greedily hoovered up by the endless stream of eager faces. Our stand also had two large video screens showing the Company's promotional videos and several of our smart banners. To complement the look, we proudly displayed several large

trees and a range of lovely pot plants. All these were provided by SPM Paul Rochford and his team.

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***We should never underestimate the positive impacts these types of interventions can have. Many of us were first turned onto horticulture in our formative years at school and the seed is set early quite on. It is a pleasure to witness the open-minded approach these young people have: Jonathan Matheson***



Attendees were fascinated by what they could learn on the individual stands, in this case a close-up of bees on the Pollinating London stand



Schoolchildren were queuing to get in!

## Company members help out

Our stand was kindly delivered by Rochford's the previous afternoon and several Schools Outreach team members were on hand to erect it and sort out the right look and feel. A couple of hours of lifting, carrying, grunting and groaning (those Guildhall steps!) saw the stand complete and looking great. The next morning the team was out in force ready to welcome the schools. Led by the Joint Heads of Schools Outreach Camilla King and Simon Catford, we were joined by Margaret Hanna, Sarah Counter, Adam Stoter, Lilidh Matthews and Jonathan Matheson. Other members of the Company dropped by to say hello and it was a privilege to welcome the then-Master, Cindy Peck, to our stand for her first-ever LSL experience. She chatted to the team and to several young people as they passed by. We would like to think she was impressed!

## Positive feedback

Subsequent feedback has been good and there is no doubt that the LSL – and the Gardeners' involvement in it – has had positive impacts. As Jonathan Matheson, Head of Education said: "We should never underestimate the positive impacts these types of interventions can have. Many of us were first turned onto horticulture in our formative years at school and the seed is set quite early on. It is a real pleasure to witness the open-minded approach these young people have." Lis Goodwin, Past Master Educator and LSL Director added, "We are delighted to have the on-going support of the Gardeners' Company at this event and look forward to working with you again in the Future."

## Future planning

A great event which did much to promote horticulture in general and the Company in particular. Thank you to all who worked so hard to make the event such a success. Plans are underway for 2026!

## Come and join us

If you would like to join the Schools Outreach team and share our passion for making horticulture more accessible, inclusive and diverse, just email the Clerk: clerk@gardenerscompany.org.uk for further details. Even if you can manage only one day per year, every contribution is welcome. We would love to have you onboard!



The Gardeners' Company stand was kept very busy



There was much to learn



Many went home with full 'goody bags'



The Outreach team were kept busy with many questions from the schoolchildren



# SPRING COURT LUNCH

On a bright and warm Cambridgeshire day, we assembled in the heart of the City of London for the WCoG's Spring Court Lunch writes Dr Sid Sullivan

**Chapel for the Bishop of Ely**  
Confused, don't be, allow me to explain. We assembled at St Etheldreda's Church, Ely Place. It is aptly named, as the land that the church was originally built on was considered to be a part of Cambridgeshire, courtesy of the monarch, as the town chapel for the Bishop of Ely.

**Once a tavern!**  
Over the years, it has had many distinctive purposes and influences. The lunch took place in the crypt, also known as the undercroft, which, at one point in its distinguished history, allegedly, served as a tavern that jostled with people and conversations.

**Great atmosphere**  
The crypt was a delight, laid out in tables of nine, that allowed conversation between most people at the table and provided splendid views of the stained glass windows. At table nine, it was our delight to welcome SPM Stephen Bernhard and to re-acquaint

ourselves with him and our shared memories. Stephen was in fine form and, as usual, welcomed us all in his customary charming way.

**New Liverymen**  
The Master welcomed those assembled for the lunch and during the meal formally introduced us to the five individuals who had earlier been admitted to the Livery: Jill Ede, Kristopher Harper-Allison, Diana Kyle, Guy Moreton, and Gillian Taylor. The lunch was a splendid affair, served with skill and precision by the caterers.

**Welcoming the guests**  
It was also sufficiently relaxing that one could indulge in the surroundings and muse over the happenings that the interior of the church had been witness to over the many years of its existence. Following on from the lunch the incomparable Assistant Jonathan Matheson welcomed the guest with his gentle humour and customary wit.

**Dr Adrian James**  
The formal speaker was Dr Adrian James, who has served as a senior member of the soon to be disbanded NHS England. Dr James' speech provided much 'food for thought' including a very interesting overview of his impressive experience at NHS England and an apposite plea that whatever may replace NHS England, a focus on people and not organisation structure should be the guiding principle in its design. Dr James also proposed a toast to the Gardeners' Company and the Master.

**Echoes of the tavern...**  
As we began to leave the church and return to the outside world there were a last few moments to reflect on what had been a splendid lunch and gathering of fellow gardeners and the conversations that we had shared. Perhaps also, and if Churches have memories, the crypt may have been reminded of one of its earlier, alleged, associations...



The Master and her guests with the Upper and Lower Wardens and the Spade Bearer prior to lunch



St Etheldreda's Church Crypt, also known as the Undercroft is alleged to have once-served as a tavern



One could indulge in the surroundings and muse over the happenings that the interior of the church had been witness to over the many years of its existence

# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

**Our varied help**  
One of the privileges of chairing your Company's charitable arm is to see the range of good causes that we support. Our charitable objectives do not constrain what we can do, and our processes mean we can be quicker and more imaginative than might be possible in a large charity.

**Working flexibly**  
An example is the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh. It was one of the places the Company visited last year on the Scotland trip. In January this year the Edinburgh Botanic Garden itself, as well as its other sites at Benmore, Dawyck and Logan, took a terrible battering from storm Eowyn, resulting in very significant damage affecting many trees and structures. Quickly your Charity made a donation of £1500, a small contribution to the massive costs of the clear up, but a signal of our support to our fellow gardeners. After the Botanics had assessed the longer

term implications they asked us for a larger grant, which we were delighted to support. Our grant of £15,000 over three years will go towards the phased repair and replanting of the alpine greenhouses – an outstanding plant collection.

**Different charities supported**  
Often we are asked to help charities using horticulture in their work with people who face exceptional challenges in life. At the June Trustees meeting we gave grants to the Spitalfields Trust who work with people with experience of homelessness and addiction, and Core Arts in Hackney who train people with severe mental ill-health. And we do not forget the benefits of horticulture to society more widely, at the same meeting agreeing, among others, grants to our very own Flowers in the City, and to the Professional Gardeners Trust for their work in supporting learning by those working in the sector.

## CHARITY



In future we hope to bring you news of these projects as they progress, but in the meantime the range of work supported by the Company's charity is featured in the articles below.



**Often we are asked to help charities using horticulture in their work with people who face exceptional challenges in life**



# JOHN GIBSON SCHOLARSHIP GRANT

The Worshipful Company of Gardeners of London Charity granted £2,000 per year for three years to fund this scholarship

Created by the Colegrave Seabrook Foundation, the John Gibson Environmental Scholarship was named after the longest-serving trustee of the Foundation. It was launched to reflect the keen interest in sustainable and environmental approaches to horticulture amongst the new generation of horticultural students.

**This Year's recipient**  
This year the trustees have selected Jeni Campbell as the winner of the John Gibson Scholarship. Jeni is studying at Greenmount Campus, CAFRE, in Northern Ireland for a BSc in Horticulture. Jeni has a keen interest in environmental change and how horticulture can be used to help mitigate the effects of this. She is currently working on her dissertation investigating the effects of silica on crop nutrients and plans to go on to further study through a Masters degree or possibly a PhD.

On hearing that she had been awarded this scholarship, Jeni told us: "I can't

*begin to thank the Colegrave Seabrook Foundation and the Worshipful Company of Gardeners of London Charity enough for this scholarship. This means so much and has given me such a confidence boost to step forward into my career after graduation. Thank you so much! I'm so excited to head into a career I'm passionate about."*



**This means so much to me and has given me such a confidence boost to step forward into my career after graduation**

Jeni Campbell is investigating the effects of silica on crop nutrients





# LONDON IN BLOOM REPORT

Peter Holman, FCIHort, CPP-I, NDH, DMS, Acting Chair London in Bloom, explains the good work done in 2024 and the plans for this year

In Greater London, 2024 unfolded as a transformative chapter for London in Bloom. Our campaign witnessed a positive increase in entries, particularly in two key sectors: Community Gardening and Public Parks & Gardens. This increase wasn't just a statistic but a testament to the spirit of locals coming together, especially in underrepresented areas, nurturing their gardens and fostering a sense of community. The creativity and enthusiasm displayed by these individuals breathed new life into many public green spaces, inviting appreciation from every corner of Greater London.

## Businesses step up

In a world increasingly attuned to corporate responsibility, businesses increased their participation, recognising the importance of urban greening initiatives. While traditional Bloom activities faced some challenges, the rise of community gardening, volunteering, and environmental stewardship hints at a positive future. The Royal Parks Guild once again supported our Gardener/Young Gardener Award. Additionally, Grosvenor Landscape Management supported a Biodiversity Award to encourage a shift towards more biodiverse gardening and horticultural practices at home and in community and public spaces.

## Improved finances

Financially, we found ourselves in a

slightly improved position, thanks to the unwavering support from our loyal partners. Our initiatives flourished with the backing of the The Worshipful Company of Gardeners of London Charity and the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association. Support from Grosvenor Landscape Management and a dedicated private donor further bolstered our income. Additionally, our expansion of the RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' community gardening scheme (managed by London in Bloom) brought in extra resources to meet our commitments. However, there is still much to do to sustain and develop Bloom and offer more excellent future involvement opportunities.

## Pursuit of sustainability

In our pursuit of sustainability, London in Bloom significantly promoted environmentally friendly gardening methods, inspiring participants to adopt practices that minimise the impact on our natural resources and climate.

## Gardens awarded

In 2024 the Trustees awarded a total of 165 Gold, 50 Silver Gilt, and 6 Silver awards. Additionally, we awarded 130 Community Gardening awards were presented, along with 38 awards for exceptional merit.

## Encouraging greater participation

Trustees acknowledged the rapid changes around us and the evolving dynamics impacting local authorities and communities and continue to

introduce new and simplified categories to encourage greater participation from the people of London.

## Our vision

As a founding member of the Britain in Bloom Federation, London in Bloom aims to inspire meaningful change and foster a sense of belonging and involvement in the communities we serve. Our vision is clear: to identify practical steps to align Bloom with the realities of modern life.

## This year's programme

In 2025, we have set our sights on sustaining current activities, enhancing participation, and expanding our mentoring and advisory programs. Also in 2025, our dedicated group of volunteer Judges and Assessors will continue to give their time and knowledge to ensure London in Bloom remains committed to fairness and an understanding of Bloom's changing landscape.

## Supporting the greening of the capital

We are always seeking to support, mentor and advise those who support the greening and the sustaining of our Capital. With a pledge to provide updated information and support to our participants, we stand ready to make a lasting impact on the lives of Londoners. Driven by a passion for community and a love for gardening and nature, we look forward to nurturing growth for another 60 years, planting the seeds of optimism for our Great Capital.



City of London - Paul's Walk  
(City of London School)



Red Cross Garden in  
Southwark, South London



Gillespie Park and Ecology Centre, near the  
Arsenal football ground in North London

# ORCHARD FOR A HOSPICE

CHARITY



In October last year the Worshipful Company of Gardeners generously donated a sum of £1,265 for a heritage orchard planting project at St Wilfrid's Hospice in Eastbourne, writes Emma Osbourne, Trusts and Foundations Fundraiser

## Project aims

The aims of the project are to support patient wellbeing through enjoyment of our gardens and orchard, increase biodiversity, provide pollen for our hospice bees and, in due course, use the fruit and honey for patient meals. The purchase of an apple press will eventually enable us to juice some of the fruit for our patients, which will be particularly nutritious for those on liquid foods.

## Apple trees purchased

I am pleased to say that, while it's too early to report on the outcomes, we've used your grant to purchase 27 trees from the Brogdale Heritage Apple Collection and planted them all in our orchard earlier this year. Next, our Head Gardener Kevin is going to make each tree a varnished tag from yew or apple wood and engrave them all to acknowledge the Worshipful Company of Gardeners' support for this project. The 27 trees cost £980 in total, and

we spent the remaining money on an apple press. The gardens make such a positive difference to everyone's sense of wellbeing, especially our inpatients; fortunately, all inpatient rooms have a peaceful, beautiful garden view which is very healing for patients and their loved ones at such a difficult time.

## Our achievements

Despite the funding challenges that we're facing, I'm pleased to share some of our achievements from 2023-24: 183 patients with ages ranging from 16 to 103 were admitted to our Inpatient Unit with the average length of stay being 22 days.

## 'Living Well Service'

Our 'Living Well Service' had 5,798 contacts with 713 patients and their families and carers, 916 people were supported by our counsellors, social workers and spiritual coordinator, both pre and post bereavement, and 3,354 counselling support sessions were

undertaken including with 103 children and young people via the Seahorse Project. We supported 2,358 people across our catchment area, 1,573 of whom were patients.

## In numbers

Our community teams supported 1,286 (82%) patients in their own home and our Nurse Line service received over 13,700 calls. 96% of respondents to our 'Voices' survey said they were extremely likely to recommend St Wilfrid's Hospice to friends and family. 91% of respondents felt the care they received on the Inpatient Unit was outstanding or excellent one quoted: "Absolutely amazing! The support for me and my husband has been incredible."

## Thank you

Thank you very much to The Worshipful Gardeners of London Charity for your generous support of this important planting project.



Head Gardener Kevin shows his appreciation!



Each tree will have a varnished tag (example above for the Duchess of Cornwall rose) to acknowledge the generosity of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners support of the project



VISIT TO IRELAND 9<sup>TH</sup> - 13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER

Explore the beautiful gardens of Dublin and County Wicklow including an optional visit to Lambay Island



# THRIVE PROJECT SUMMARY

CHARITY



The Worshipful Company of Gardeners granted £10,000 per annum over three years to fund Thrive's Growing Out 'Pathways' programme. Here are the final results

**Life changing for mental health suffers**  
Growing Out is a free social and therapeutic gardening programme for adults experiencing mental ill-health, such as anxiety, depression, isolation, or other mental health conditions. Weekly sessions are held across Thrive's beautiful gardens in Battersea Park, providing a unique opportunity to get active outdoors in nature, socialise with others, learn gardening skills, gain confidence, and improve overall health and wellbeing.

## Working towards horticultural qualifications

The programme is offered in two stages over one year – starting with Pathways for the first six months and progressing to a City & Guilds Level 1 Qualification in Horticulture for the second six months. Your support of that programme has come to an end and the panel on the right shows the final figures with the number of attendees.

**What the patient/clients said:**  
*"I'm new in London and having these sessions helps me connect with others, spend more time in nature and feel more confident. I feel quite relaxed after the sessions. While I still struggle with anxiety I'm feeling better one step at a time. Thank you for creating this space!"*

*"This is a very different experience to my normal day to day. Before Thrive, the closest to gardening etc I had done in recent years was walking through a park. It helped with giving me mental space which has had a positive impact on my mental health and I am enjoying learning new things and techniques."*

*"I have supported Thrive for years and when my own health declined, Thrive helped build me back up. What has been most surprisingly meaningful for me is working in public gardens because we can see that our work is having a positive impact not only on us but many others."*

## GROWING OUT SUMMARY

- 138 Client gardeners attended
- 25 Client gardeners completed the City and Guilds Level 1 Certificate in Practical Horticulture Skills
- 7 Client gardeners are currently studying for their qualification
- 28 Client Gardener Support Volunteers assisted in the garden sessions giving a total of 4,120 volunteer hours

98% said they learnt new things/  
gained new skills  
97% said they had socialised more with others  
97% said they spent more time gardening or outside  
95% said it had made them happier or improved their mental well-being  
95% said it increased or restored their confidence  
93% said it had improved their physical health



Clients benefit hugely from their gardening sessions and many go on to get horticultural qualifications

# NEO-PALLADIAN PERFECTION

The Gardeners visited spectacular Chiswick House and its gardens in February this year writes Victoria Inglis

Chiswick House, built between 1726 and 1729, is one of the earliest and most important neo-Palladian villas in England. It was designed by its owner Richard Boyle, third Earl of Burlington, with advice from his protégé, the painter, architect and garden designer William Kent.

## Showcase for exquisites

It was to be a magnificent architectural showcase for Boyle's exquisite collection of paintings, furniture (some designed from that period by William Kent) and architectural drawings. Here he entertained gatherings of his family, friends, eminent grandees and the cultural elite. The house passed to the Devonshire Family by marriage in 1753 and the house and garden buildings are in the care of English Heritage and the grounds in the care of the Borough of Hounslow.

## Principle rooms

We were lucky enough to have an exclusive private tour. We were divided into two groups. Our group was shown around the house first by house-guide Sarah. As inspired by Palladio the principal rooms for entertaining are on the first floor and set around a central octagonal hall. Of note were the Blue Velvet Room, the Green Velvet Room, the Red Velvet Room and the stunning white and gilt Gallery.

## Inigo influence

The Gallery has a ceiling rumoured to be inspired by Inigo Jones's design for the Banqueting House in Whitehall. The diamond patterned coffering style

of the two apses is taken from the Temple of the Sun and Moon in Rome. The gilt console tables, thought to be designed by Kent, have inlaid marble tops believed to have been acquired by Burlington in Genoa in 1719. This room has a Venetian window door giving a wonderful vista and direct access onto the garden by an external staircase.

## The Garden

After a delicious lunch in the Cafe and a photo of the Livery visitors with their Master at the entrance to the Villa, we started a wonderful tour of the garden with Head Gardener Rosie Fyles, assisted by Ariane, the in-house garden historian. The current garden is formed from three original properties: Chiswick House, Sutton Court (purchased in 1727) and Moreton Hall (purchased by the Duke of Devonshire in 1812). From 1716 Lord Burlington, with Kent, decided to open up the setting with a pictorial, semi naturalistic approach to garden design. They removed the old maze and large areas of trees, dug a larger undulating pond and used the spoil to create a mound for a water cascade. Large lawns were created and lined with cypress trees alternated with stone urns.

## "Patte d'Oie" avenues

The Exedra here was created by Kent with yew hedges to incorporate Burlington's collection of Ancient and C18th sculpture. The "Patte d'Oie" avenues (so called as they resemble a goose's foot) radiate beyond. These were probably laid out in 1716 and are the earliest surviving feature of the

garden. Each vista ends with an ornamental building.

## Ionic temple

In 1727 Burlington and Kent created the Orange Tree Garden and Ionic Temple. A circular reflective pond sits in front with an obelisk at its centre. The Ionic Temple designed by Burlington was inspired by the Pantheon in Rome. The Terraces are reminiscent of a Roman Theatre and historically there had been orange trees in pots on the terraces in Summer.

## The stone bridge

After purchasing Sutton Court in 1727 Burlington moved his deer park there from the eastern side of the Chiswick property where the Doric Column now sits and the Deer House still remains here. The fifth Duke of Devonshire built the current Stone Bridge connecting the two properties in 1774. It was probably designed by James Wyatt.

## Splendid camelias

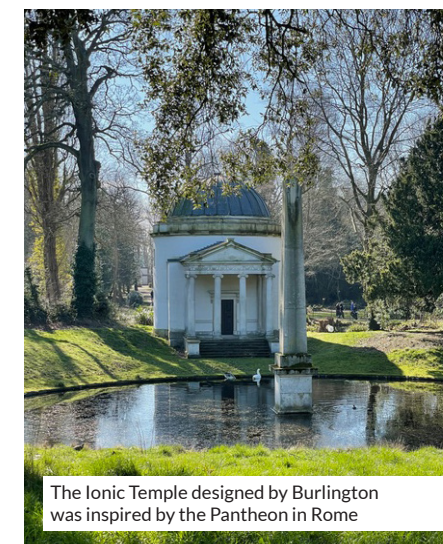
In 1812 the Duke of Devonshire acquired Moreton Hall, which he then demolished. He then created the Italian Garden and built a Conservatory. It was in this garden we were able to view the spectacular collection of camellias. Two original Cedar trees planted by Burlington and Kent frame the view of Chiswick House.

## Thank you

We were made to feel most welcome by the Chiswick House team and had a wonderful day. Huge thanks to the organisers of this event.



Chiswick House is one of the earliest and most important neo-Palladian villas in England



The Ionic Temple designed by Burlington was inspired by the Pantheon in Rome



# PETER WAINE AWARDED OBE

Past Master Peter Waine's OBE was announced in His Majesty The King's Birthday Honours list. The citation stated: 'For services to the natural environment.'

Peter has chaired several organisations including the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, where he helped to secure National Park status for the South Downs, and successfully argued that Western Weald should attain the same status.

As chairman of The Tree Council, Peter established two after-care days a year to improve the chance of success for the thousands of trees planted each year. Previously many had died, so that wasteful episode was stopped. And as chairman of the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale, the largest such collection in the world, founded by Henry VIII, Peter ensured its long term financial independence and future. Peter has also been a trustee of the Gardens Trust.

On hearing the news of this award Peter said: "I am delighted to have been involved in campaigns to help ensure that our countryside is not sacrificed unnecessarily while ensuring that we meet the growing aspirations of an increasing population. It can be done!"

Peter has written or co-authored eight books, two of which are on the countryside and has also been a judge for the Wainwright Literary Prize which celebrates writing on nature and the countryside.

Peter also has had the distinction of having one of his poems (above right) published in Country Life magazine's 'Poet's Corner'; a slot usually reserved for well-known and long-dead poets.

*"The fallen leaf  
A token of the passing year  
Near perfect, yet so brief  
And soon to disappear.  
A jewel unbound  
Yet hanging long to be enjoyed  
A berry crushed upon the ground  
A work of art destroyed"*



# ROYAL WARRANT FOR WATSON-SMYTH

Liveryman Miles Watson-Smyth's company Windowflowers has been granted a Royal Warrant by His Majesty The King as suppliers of Exterior Plant Displays.

This recognition demonstrates his company's commitment to providing high-quality displays, alongside a deep respect for the environment and the vital role of greening urban areas.

Established in 1947, Windowflowers has been supplying businesses, hotels, landlords, towns, cities and parishes with vibrant and sustainable planting. Their services encompass weekly cut flowers, interior and exterior planting and even Christmas trees, all carefully installed and maintained.

The business was founded by Miles' uncle and aunt after the second world war, initially using ammunition boxes as windowboxes. The Flowers in the City Campaign helped to encourage City businesses to install windowboxes and, together with the Coronation and The Festival of Britain, the business then thrived.

Managing Director, Miles Watson-Smyth, commented: "We are absolutely thrilled and deeply honoured to receive a Royal Warrant from His Majesty The King. It is a tremendous validation of our dedication and passion." He added: "This is also a truly proud moment for Windowflowers, and a remarkable recognition of our commitment to quality and excellence."

The Royal Warrant process is a tradition of the highest recognition that dates back to the 15th century, with current Royal Warrants still being awarded by the Royal Household. Windowflowers is proud to have received this sovereign recognition and does not underestimate the significance of such an acknowledgement.



Liveryman Miles Watson-Smyth is "Deeply honoured" to receive the Royal Warrant from The King.