

# THE SPADE

THE AUTUMN EDITION 2025 - ISSUE 72

ARE ROBOTIC  
**BEEES**  
THE ANSWER?



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THE WORSHIPFUL  
COMPANY OF GARDENERS  
UPCOMING DAIRY DATES

DATE	EVENT	VENUE AND INFORMATION
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.
Wednesday 11 February 2026	Colesbourne Park	A tour of these extraordinary private gardens, featuring Britain's premier collection of snowdrops. Followed by lunch and a trip to another nearby garden.
Friday 20 March 2026	United Guilds Service	We join the other Livery companies and guilds for a splendid service at St Paul's Cathedral. Followed by an optional lunch.
Tuesday 21 April 2026	Spring Lunch	Held at Stationers' Hall. We will be able to enjoy pre-lunch drinks in their beautiful garden (weather permitting). Business attire.
Monday 27 April 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
Thursday 14 May 2026	Company Golf Day	A full day of golf, followed by an informal dinner. Venue TBC.
Tuesday 26 May 2026	Fairchild Service and Lecture	Our annual guild service, featuring music, prayers and readings. Followed by the Fairchild Lecture and a drinks reception. St Giles' Cripplegate, business attire.

THE MASTER  
Alderman Robert Howard

UPPER WARDEN  
David Balfour

RENTER WARDEN  
Robert Ivison

SPADEBEARER  
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A MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

I hope you all enjoyed a well-deserved restful break over the summer. After the recess and with the advent of autumn, the new school year is fully upon us and our Company is as busy and active as ever, as this edition of The Spade shows



Dr Christine Rigden, our new Clerk

Our new Clerk

On Monday 15 th September we were very pleased to welcome our new Clerk, Dr Christine Rigden. Christine will be known to many of you as the City's non-Aldermanic Sheriff in 2015/16. She knows the workings of the Livery well, having twice been Master: of the Constructors in 2009, and the Masons in 2020. After a brief but thorough induction from Ollie, she has grasped the reins and is off to a flying start. On a practical note, Christine can be reached on the same phone (07947 794613) and email (clerk@gardenerscompany.org.uk). The Clerk will continue to be well supported by Helen Colebrook (Events and Communications) and Georgina Faulkner (Finance). We wish Ollie all the very best in his future endeavours and look forward to seeing him again very soon, albeit in a different capacity, when we hope to be able to thank him properly.

Lady Mayor

At Common Hall on Monday 29th September, Dame Susan Langley DBE was elected the 697th Lord Mayor of London. Following in the footsteps of Dame Mary Donaldson, a Gardener, and Dame Fiona Woolf. At the Silent Ceremony in November Sue becomes only the third woman to hold the office since its establishment in the 13th

Century, and the first to be styled as "Lady Mayor of London". Sue will be supported in her year by her two Sheriffs, Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney and Keith Bottomley CC. We look forward to welcoming the Mayoral team in the coming year.

Company news

In September I was pleased to lead the Company's overseas trip to Dublin and County Wicklow, very ably assisted by our expert tour guide and Liveryman, Trevor Edwards. Particular highlights for me included a very wet Kilmacurragh Botanical Gardens and Jimi Blake's fabulous gardens at Hunting Brook - and of course, the opportunity to spend so much quality time with our fellow Gardeners. Since the summer we have enjoyed another City Garden Walk and a bouquet making workshop at Howbury Hall and The School of Sustainable Floristry. Between now and Christmas we look forward to an equally busy season. We have our annual Harvest Festival and Christmas Carols at St Giles Cripplegate, and our Autumn Court dinner on 5 th November at Vintners Hall, with guest speaker Sir Roderick Newton, the new Chair of Plant Heritage. Details of all of the forthcoming events are on the website and in this edition of The Spade.

The Spade

I know you will want to join with me in congratulating our Editor for his sterling work on the new longer format of the Spade, which continues to go from strength to strength. In this latest edition we have such horticultural treats as the extraordinary development of robotic bees; an update from the Education team on their recent outstanding "Teach the Teachers" initiative; the founding and early history of the Chelsea Physic Garden and the creation of

The Quiet Garden at St Brides; plus reports on the visits to Rochester, Sweden and Doddington Place.

The good work of our Charity

It is also pleasing that the expanded Spade affords us more space to read about the continued good work of the Charity. In this edition we have updates on grants made to support the creation of a sensory garden for mental health patients in Surrey; a 'living green screen' for a junior school in Brent; the funding of a horticulture training programme for young people with special needs in the Midlands; and an outdoor lighting system in Essex to extend the usable time of a therapy garden for adults with mental health difficulties.

With your continued support, our Company continues to thrive in root and branch. I look forward to seeing you soon.



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



THE APOTHECARIES’ GARDEN

Sue Medway MBE FLS, Director of the Chelsea Physic Garden, explains how the Apothecaries’ created the garden for the botanical instruction of their apprentices

Chelsea Physic Garden was founded in 1673 by the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London: the Society had broken away from the City Company of Grocers in 1617 (The Grocers’ Company). Of importance for the siting of the new garden was the decision to establish a committee to supervise the building of a barge and bargehouse for the Company, at a time when the most effective communications in London were by river.

**Rationale for the siting of the garden**  
Chelsea, a village in the 17th century, was an area of market gardens and the creation of that early garden served three important purposes for the Apothecaries’; a base for their barge, from here they conducted “herborizing” expeditions to adjacent sites such as Battersea or Putney Heath for the botanical instruction of their apprentices; it was where they grew plants used in medicines and it was where apprentices came to learn how to identify the correct plants for their medicinal preparations. Often poisonous plants and medicinal plants that looked similar were grown next to each other to aid identification ie Conium maculatum (hemlock) next to Anthriscus sylvestris (cow parsley) which was a useful diuretic.

**Sloane’s grant to the Apothecaries’**  
Sir Hans Sloane’s acquisition of the manor of Chelsea from Sir Charles Cheyne in 1712 was followed by Sloane’s grant of the Deed of Covenant to the Society of Apothecaries in 1722 which effectively gave permanence to the establishment of the Garden (with important conditions that are still in place today).

**Innovative head gardener**  
Philip Miller, Head Gardener between 1722 and 1770, revolutionised the garden as a site for the international exchange of plants and seeds and saw the garden growing in the UK the first ever Cedrus libani (Cedar of Lebanon), Punica granatum (Pomegranate), Prunus persica (Peaches) as well as many plants from North America brought to Miller by John Bartrum. Medicinal plants growing in the Garden in the 18th century include, Podophyllum peltatum

(May apple), to become a vital anti-cancer drug in the 20th century, Ammi majus (False Bishop’s Weed) which is still useful today for the treatment of psoriasis.

**Garden facilitates seminal work**  
Elizabeth Blackwell (1699-1738) was an important botanic artist who took up residence in Swan Walk, the road abutting the Physic Garden to compile her two volume publication: “A Curious Herbal containing Five Hundred Cuts of the most useful plants which are now used in the Practice of Physick”, published in parts between 1737 and 1739. Each illustration is accompanied by a paragraph of the plant’s use; Dandelion “the roots and leaves are used as cooling, operative, provoking urine and strengthening of stomach and are much eat as a salad in Spring”; Mullein “the leaves are used for coughs, pains in the breast and colic pains and outwardly fomentations and are thought a specific against the piles. Dioscorides recommends a decoction of the root as good for the tooth ach [sic]”

**Index Horti Chelseiani**  
In Index Horti Chelseiani of 1772 an inventory of the “medicinal and useful plants growing at Chelsea” lists more than 500 plants. Of note and still in use today include Vitex agnus-castus a well

respected herbal remedy helping to regularise female hormone fluctuations, Convolvulus soldonella employed to treat digestive issues, skin irritations and respiratory ailments. Sedum album may have been used to treat ringworm, scurvy and diphtheria although modern day scientific reviews suggest that its use can be to lower high blood pressure, but only in acute cases as regular intake can induce hypertension. Asplenium scolopendrium was likely to have been used as an ointment for the treatment of piles, burns and scalds, and possibly as an infusion for the treatment of diarrhoea, dysentery, gravelly deposits of the bladder and for removing obstructions of the liver and spleen.

**Time for change**  
For over 250 years Chelsea Physic Garden was important to the success of the Apothecaries’ trade however the evolution of synthetic drugs in the later 19th century meant that the need for the Garden fell away and the Apothecaries’ signed it over to the City Parochial Foundation in 1899.

**NB: This article is not intended for use as a medicinal guide or the replacement for professional medical advice. Please do not attempt to use any of these plants without trained expertise.**



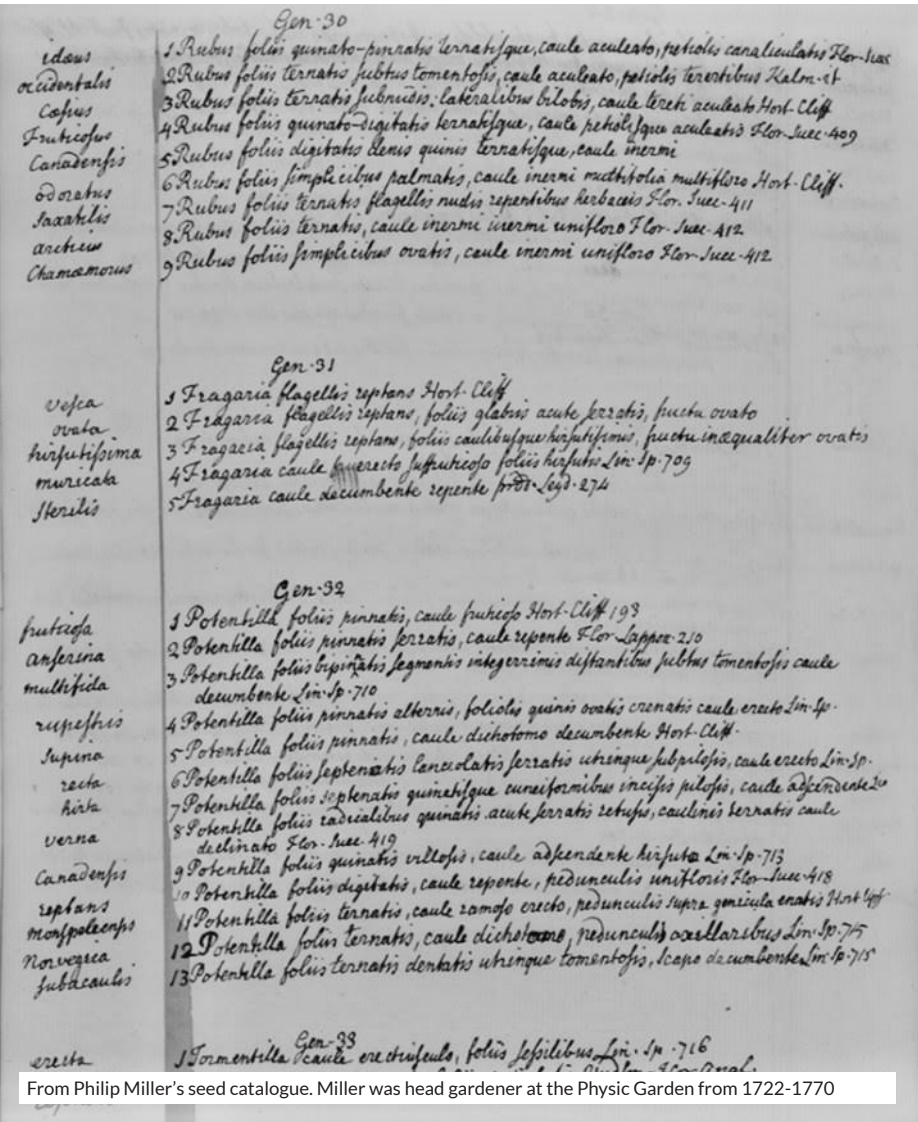
The old Physic Garden of The Society of Apothecaries in Chelsea, circa 1750, note the statue of Hans Sloane.



Elizabeth Blackwell’s drawing of motherwort



Blackwell’s impression of purple trefoil



From Philip Miller’s seed catalogue. Miller was head gardener at the Physic Garden from 1722-1770



# A DAY IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

The last event of Cindy Peck’s year as Master was a tour of the gardens at Doddington Place planned and planted in 1906 by the Oldfield family, writes Mary Cole-Adams

### A banquet of gardens

The Doddington Place gardens in Sittingbourne, Kent, are surrounded by parkland of oak, beech, lime and horse chestnuts most of which predate the house. Amicia Oldfield and Head Gardener Lucy Adams outlined their continual policy of restoration redesign and replanting as they guided us through the ‘Sunken Garden’ with its pool frequented by swallows and house martins amid vibrant box hedged herbaceous borders of self-seeded perennials. We viewed the ‘Ghost Borders’ with weeping pear trees at each end, the ‘Rock Garden’ with its ponds, gully walk, acers and Mediterranean plants. There were ancient yuccas and alpines through an avenue of silver birch leading to ‘The Folly’ and a pool with water lilies and iridescent dragon flies.

### Rare trees

A wide variety of colourful and rare acid loving trees and shrubs (some even unknown to our group!) planted in the 1960s thrive under the canopy of historic trees of the ‘Woodland Garden’ making it a magical place to walk as is the tunnel through the gigantic ‘monster shaped’ clipped yew hedges peculiar to this garden which are included in Liveryman Barbera Segall’s excellent book: *Secret Gardens of The South East*.

### Award-winning barn

The Pheasant Barn is an award-winning structure surrounded by small gardens planted for surprise and fun as well as encouraging biodiversity and a sequence of pollination throughout the year. Steep mowed paths through the long grass of the former bare sheep field lead down through native fruit trees, a wildflower meadow, (I counted nine varieties), perennial beds and beautifully crafted seating to a view over Oare Creek. The crocodile and grass labyrinth were among the surprising works of art rewarding those who braved this seemingly impenetrable route.

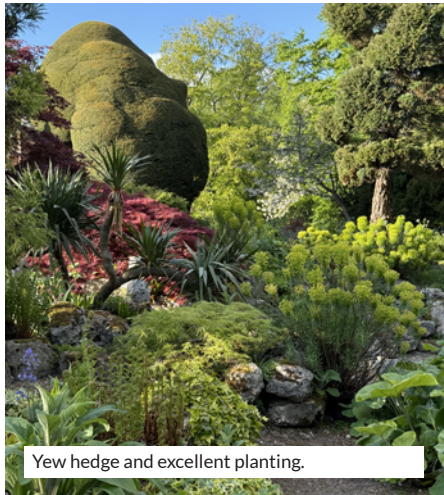
### Apricot and fig trees

The side of the Barn leading to a vegetable garden (a mixture of formal raised beds surrounded by wild herbs and flowers) had walls covered with

apricot and fig trees in full fruit while the main garden sandwiched between road and barn was planted in furrows of Lavender, Nepeta and Teucrium inspired by farmed land. Water features, a dry bed, a field of santolina and a rosemary hedge all contributed to an innovative contemporary garden



Doddington House was built in the 1870s.



Yew hedge and excellent planting.

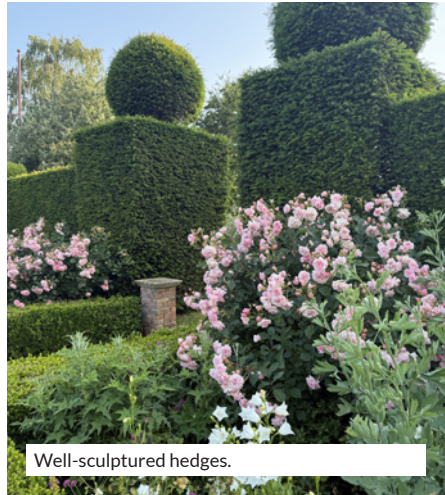


The Pheasant Barn.

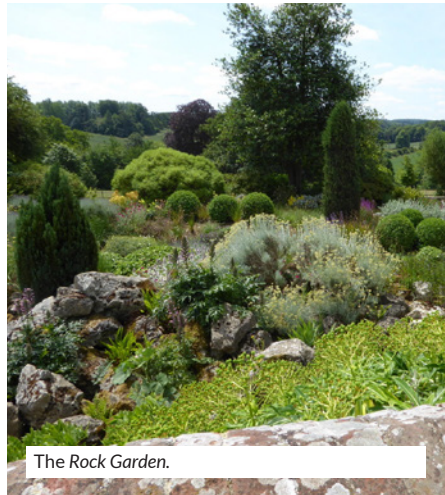
which punched far above its size.

### An inspirational visit

The gardens visited were stunning and inspired the comment from several liverymen saying: “This is why I joined the Company”. Many thanks to those who arranged this outing.



Well-sculptured hedges.



The Rock Garden.



The Wild Garden.

# CREATION OF ST BRIDE’S ‘QUIET GARDEN’

Valerie Hill-Archer explains her role in creating a garden of tranquility in this famous City of London churchyard

St Bride’s is a Grade I listed church tucked away behind Fleet Street, surrounded by its ancient churchyard garden. For the past year, after consultation with the City of London, The Quiet Garden Movement has been planning this half-acre garden’s transformation and now St Bride’s is the first church within the City to be listed by the Quiet Garden Trust charity.

### Gardens of hospitality and ‘silence’

The Quiet Garden Movement was started in 1992 by the Rev Philip Roderick, an Anglican priest who had the vision of creating gardens to offer hospitality, silence and the opportunity to simply ‘be’. It is now an international Christian movement welcoming people of all faiths or none, spirituality being no barrier to religious or cultural differences.

### Green noise screen

Valarie Hill Archer explains: “My aim was to try and enclose the churchyard as much as possible with a green screen of plants providing a baffle from the noise of the busy adjacent streets. The site posed many challenges, with existing mature trees and shrubs, poor soil and little direct sunlight. The plan was to retain plants which were already thriving and in-fill with new plants capable of surviving in this difficult environment and requiring little gardening maintenance which is provided by the City Corporation.

### Enter Mark Lane

“I realised that I needed expert professional help and looked to my friend, Mark Lane, with his encyclopaedic knowledge to advise me. Shape, form, texture and especially scent were factors in the choices made. Together, we planned the beds and created a ‘wish list’ of plants. It was important to choose a colour palette of white and pastel shades invoking a sense of peaceful tranquillity. Mark’s input was invaluable and warmly appreciated by all at St Bride’s. We were fortunate in securing sponsorship from two companies, Mace and Keltbray, who between them paid for all the plants and provided volunteers to set out the garden.

### More to come

“The garden is still a work-in-progress, which we look forward to seeing mature. Yew trees and Trachelospermum

jasminoides will shield the railings, Hakonechloa macra edge the walls of the raised beds, and herbaceous plants provide groundcover. Sarcococca ‘Dragons Gate’, Osmanthus, Daphne bhulua ‘Jaqueline Postill’ and Rosa ‘Kew Gardens’ will perfume the air. Small ornamental trees – Acer palmatum ‘Sango Kahu’, Cornus ‘Norman Hadden’ and Cornus mas ‘Variegata’ - will provide additional interest throughout the year.

### Please visit

“There are many benches within the churchyard provided by the City Corporation, giving visitors the opportunity to rest and enjoy the garden. You would be most welcome to visit, or follow the progress of the garden via the St Bride’s website: [www.stbrides.com](http://www.stbrides.com). If you would like to learn more about the ‘Quiet Garden Movement’ go to: [www.quietgarden.org](http://www.quietgarden.org)



Volunteers proudly stand by a newly planted tree.



Valerie Hill-Archer’s plan was to enclose St Brides with a green screen of plants providing a ‘baffle’ from the noise of busy streets.



# MASTER’S TRIP TO ROCHESTER

Gillian Nicholson guides us through the recent Company tour of this Kentish jewel which has historical links to King Charles II, Charles Dickens and the Huguenots

What a wonderful outing! The weather, initially overcast, became glorious sunshine. We started our visit to Rochester — site of an early Roman bridge across the lowest part of the Medway — with coffee at Catherine Stewart’s (sister of Lucy Van Liew) flat in a converted brewery before going on to Restoration House.

**Landscaping into ‘garden rooms’**  
Robert Tucker and Jonathan Wilmot bought Restoration House, the brewery complex and associated carpark in 2009. They have restored the house and converted the brewery into flats. The outdoor area has been divided into a series of ‘garden rooms’ based on a variety of principles involving old materials and lime mortar, Italianate design, topiary, flowing water, vegetable production as well as the restoration of a Tudor diamond patterned wall. A *paulownia tomentosa* and a quince were in flower, and a lemon tree producing fruit in the microclimate.

**Royal journey to Restoration**  
Restoration House is a grade 1 listed

building which was at risk when its owners purchased it. While the oldest part was built in 1454, the house’s heyday was in the 1700’s and it owes its name to Charles II having stayed there on his way to London after the Restoration of the Monarchy in England in 1660. It is of great architectural significance as the best pre-Civil war town house in England. Restoration has preserved wonderful floorboards of elm, wall panelling, a Dutch fireplace and many other features. The owners have filled it with period appropriate furniture, pictures by Mytens, Gainsborough, Reynolds and others.

**Literary fame**  
Charles Dickens who later lived nearby, based Miss Havisham’s (Satis) house in Great Expectations on Restoration House having seen it as a small boy possibly at a time of neglect. The Master thanked Robert, Jonathan and Catherine for a fascinating visit.

**The Dean’s garden**  
After lunch at Don Vincenzo, we met the Dean of Rochester, known to Tom

Gough who was returning to his *alma mater* having attended King’s School Rochester founded with the bishopric and church in 604 AD. The Dean and Graham, the head gardener, showed us the Dean’s pleasure garden enclosed by a Roman wall for which funds are being sought to make it a health and well-being garden. It has many examples of roses, an orchard and some fine trees. A previous Dean, Samuel Hole, had been passionate about roses and started the National Rose Society.

**Rochester cathedral**  
Our final visit was to the cathedral, the present building is Norman, like the castle, from 1080 and has some splendid Romanesque features, preserved because money ran out to rebuild in perpendicular Gothic.

**Huguenot hospital**  
We walked back through La Providence, the French Hospital, built to relieve distress in migrant Huguenots in the eighteenth century and now attractively converted to alms houses. Many of us have vowed to return.



The outdoor area has been divided into a number of individual ‘garden rooms’.



The house’s heyday was in the 1700’s and it owes its name to Charles II having stayed there on his way to London after the Restoration of the Monarchy in England in 1660.



Charles Dickens based Miss Havisham’s (Satis) house in Great Expectations this house having seen it as a small boy.



The owners have filled the house with period-appropriate furnishings and paintings.



The rooms are very atmospheric.



Restoration has preserved wonderful floorboards of elm, wall panelling and many other period features.



The Master and Barbara Segall at Rochester Cathedral.



Members found the Restoration House gardens fascinating.



# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CARL LINNEAUS

## From taxonomy to a new Swedish Iron Age, Rex Thornborough reports on an unforgettable overseas visit to Uppland in Sweden

After a rather early start for some of us to catch a 06.40hrs flight from Heathrow to Stockholm we began our journey to discover the fascinating links between the work that made Carl Linnaeus, one of the greatest scientists of all time, and how digging stuff out of holes in the ground was so important to Sweden as a nation.

### Carl Linnaeus Museum

After booking into our hotel in Uppsala it was off to the Linnaeus Gardens and Museum. This is where Carl Linnaeus lived and worked for 35 years and is a beautifully preserved building showing what life was like for the famous scientist in the mid 1700s. We also learnt that wallpaper in those days was nailed to the walls so that you could take it with you if you moved. It was a very expensive commodity at the time and is well represented in this house.

### Reconstructed garden

The garden is a reconstruction of what his botanical garden would have looked like. Linnaeus, also known as Carl von Linne after his ennoblement, would have known of the work of Thomas Fairchild who died when Linnaeus was 22 years old, a year before he started lecturing at Uppsala University. That evening after an excellent dinner in what had once been a prison, we had a most interesting talk on the history of Sweden and Uppsala by John Ringh, a local historian and guide.

### Linnaeus' summer residence

The next morning it was off to Hammarby House, Linnaeus' summer residence where his family could escape the unhealthy environment of Uppsala — pollution was a problem even then! Linnaeus had a specially built outhouse on a rocky hill, with no stove or fire, to store his beloved collections, as he was so fearful of fire since it had caused so much damage to Uppsala in 1702. Another remarkably well preserved capsule of life in the mid eighteenth century. Then on to Uppsala University Botanical Garden, the land for which was donated by King Gustav III in 1787. It is set out in the Baroque style and was formerly part of the Palace gardens.

### Resting place of Norse gods

Then a visit to Old Uppsala, which had a string of Iron Age burial mounds allegedly holding Thor, Odin and Freya, the three pagan Gods. Artefacts recovered from the burial mounds bore striking similarities in their design to those found at Sutton Hoo. Gamla Uppsala Church dates from the 12th century, built over a Pagan temple and is the burial place of Anders Celcius, of temperature fame and contains several rune stones.

### Forging a new Sweden

The next day we were off to a very deep hole in the ground... the Dannemora mine in Osterbybruk. Iron had of course been known about since, er, the Iron Age but this was a source of high manganese iron ore and became the most important mine in Sweden with the majority of the bar iron it produced being exported to Sheffield to make steel and power the Industrial Revolution in Britain.

### Walloon exodus

Walloon forgemasters were persuaded to leave Wallonia, in what today is Belgium and Northern France, along with their Charcoal burners and families for an allegedly quieter life in Sweden away from the wars of central Europe. Working for the State they literally forged a new Sweden. Osterbybruk has the only remaining Walloon Forge (we were all wondering what a Vallonforge was – local pronunciation of Walloon)

### Pioneers of worker welfare

The wealth produced from Iron was obvious in the standard of the Manor houses and attached villages where a form of welfare state existed 100 years before Britain's Bournville or Port Sunlight were thought of. Forgemasters died early but their widows had a home, a cow, a garden, access to a doctor and a form of pension.

### A mini Versailles

Osterbybruk had its own splendid Manor house with lake and gardens. In its day a sort of mini Versailles but now just grass although they are going to geoscan the grounds and

try to recreate what was there in the eighteenth century. After a guided tour of the house and nearby Orbyhus Castle and dinner it was off to hotel number two at Gimo.

### Organ concert

Sunday saw us visit Lovstabruk Manor with an interesting Library by the water's edge and its church and magnificent Cahman organ. Water and damp don't go with ancient books, but they did here. When renovating the floor of the library they discovered that beneath the tiles were blocks of solid rock salt and the condition of this great collection was superb. An Orgelkonsert (organ concert) was arranged for us in the church where the organist literally pulled out all the stops to show off the magnificent tone and range of the impressive instruments.

### Farewell dinner

After visiting the not so 'English Park' at Forsmark Mill we returned to the Gimo Manor hotel for a truly splendid farewell dinner where surroundings and menu were of the highest standards and reminiscent of some of the better Livery dinners or banquets. Senior Past Master Daniel Caspi spoke, as is customary, to thank the Master and her Consort (Konsort?) for arranging such an excellent and informative visit.

### Castle and cathedral

In the morning we returned to Uppsala where, after another excellent lunch, we were joined by a guide in period costume and shown the castle and cathedral.

### Codex Argenteus

There was time to visit the University Museum and to see the Codex Argenteus or Silver Bible dating from the 6th Century before a visit to the splendid Cathedral and other historic buildings.

### A fascinating trip

A fascinating trip weaving a story of ancient folklore and history, scientific discovery and industrial development, one that will be long remembered by all those lucky enough to have taken part.



An excellent turnout for the Master's trip to Uppland, Sweden



Linnaeus in Sami costume



Hammarby House



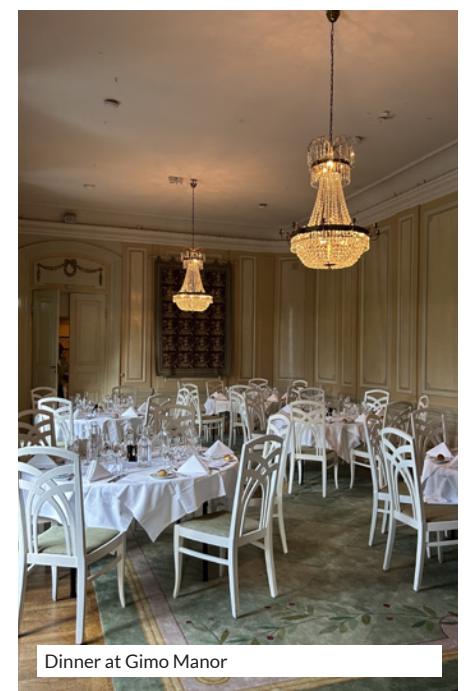
The university botanic garden



The Walloon forge



The Cahman organ



Dinner at Gimo Manor



# TEACHING THE TEACHERS

On a perfect sunny morning mid-May, the Schools Outreach team gathered at St. Giles Terrace at the City of London School for Girls for a new initiative called 'Teach the Teachers', as Margaret Hanna explains

With the help of Aman Kanwar, Director of Sustainability for the school, an event was organised on the teachers Inset Day to take about 100 teachers on tours of two local important gardens and green spaces that were good examples of pollination, climate resilience, and biodiversity. This was to show them how important these three factors are for our future and that they could be incorporated in many areas of their teaching plans to support mainstream education.

## Explaining WCoG objectives

The Outreach team and the teachers met on the tennis courts and Aman gave a few words of welcome followed by co-head of Schools Outreach, Simon Catford who introduced the WCoG, our aims and objectives, and what the plan was for the day. The teachers were to split into two groups, with half walking to Charterhouse and its beautiful square, and the other half walking to Bunhill Fields and Cemetery.

## Charterhouse Square

On Charterhouse Square the group split into two, half going off to see the gardens with head gardener Emily Blackmore and those remaining to listen to a presentation by Konstantinos Tsiolis, a pollinator ecologist for Pollinating London Together (PLT). With a backdrop of towering echium full of buzzing insects and bees, Konstantinos explained about all the different pollinators that are in London and how important it is for people to protect and nurture their habitats, be it rotting wood, piles of leaves or green debris and untouched earth areas, a particular habitat for solitary bees or pollinators. Past Master Heather Barrett Mold then went on to explain about PLT and its increasing importance to keep London's green areas thriving and also keeping track of the development of pollinators in these areas along with the educational resources to help expand

the knowledge and importance of pollinators to everyone.

## Charterhouse wildlife garden

The two groups then swapped over and Emily took the teachers through the beautiful gardens of Charterhouse to the Master's garden at the rear of the property. The Master's garden has evolved as a result of not being mown during Covid and the decision was made to make it into a wildlife garden. With the support and guidance of PLT they surveyed it through June to September and have found that how a 'light touch' has provided many more nesting sites for cavity and ground nesting pollinators. During our dry summer they have also found which plants survive best without irrigation as a result of their root systems. A moth survey was also carried out and a spectacular example was the tree that looked very dead, but was actually covered by the webbing of the Ermine Moth. Emily commented that the tree should revive again after the moth has moved on later in the summer.

## Origins of future plantings

After a short walk to Bunhill Fields burial ground and under the shady canopy of some of London's plane trees, Jake Tibbetts, the City of London's garden manager, gave a presentation on climate resilience. Jake explained the importance of knowing the origins of the trees that will be planted in the future. This is in relation to sustainability as a result of changes to the climate.

## Plant trials

Horticulturalists are now having to look at oak trees whose origins are from south east Europe and are therefore more resilient to these changes to our climate. Continuing with the problem of drought the subject moved on to trials that the garden department are carrying out in

relation to future projects. Two groups of plants are being trialed, one being well nurtured and watered while the other slowly being deprived of nutrients and water until the minimum level is reached for growth. While the second group took longer to develop, they have proved to be stronger and more suitable for future planting.

## Trees affected by climate change

Jake then referred to the large trees overhead and the importance of shade, in particular London's magnificent plane trees. Their ability to give both beauty, pollution control and shade to our streets and parks has been somewhat taken for granted. Where in the past they have shed the odd small end branch it has been found that with increasing stress such as drought, a pathogen/fungi called Massaria is spreading from Europe and causing whole branches to fall off with all the subsequent problems that arise from this development.

## Biodiversity of the cemetery

The second half of the tour of Bunhill Fields was conducted by Sophie Ridley and Dan the gardener who explained to the group how they managed the burial ground. They focused on individual areas throughout the year to encourage different plants to grow and therefore expand the biodiversity of the cemetery and how all this was done by volunteers.

## Very positive feedback

Many of the Teachers commented on how interesting the whole outing had been and that there were certainly educational opportunities to use the information they had heard that morning. Many were surprised that there were two such lovely green spaces within such a short walk of the school. Perhaps one of the best comments from a teacher was: "That was the best Inset Day I have had in 16 years"



In mid-May, the Schools Outreach team gathered at St. Giles Terrace at the City of London School for Girls for a new initiative called 'Teach the Teachers'.



The group at Charterhouse Square.



The teachers were split into two groups.



Preparing the teachers packed lunches!



Konstantinos Tsiolis, a pollinator ecologist for Pollinating London Together (PLT) explained about all the different pollinators that are in London and how important it is to protect and nurture their habitats.



**UP AND COMING**

## CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE - 12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

St Giles' Cripplegate, a beautiful service of readings and music to mark the festive season, followed by a reception. Business attire.



# ARE ROBOTIC BEES THE ANSWER?



If you think that science, technology and now AI can solve all problems... then your answer may well be 'yes' to the question above. But where are we with solving the problem of declining pollinators? Martin Panter updates us on the latest work

## Pollinator predicament

Pollinators are crucial for the health of our environment. From the clothes we wear to the foods we eat; bees are there every step of the way. But lately, these vital creatures are disappearing due to a number of elements including pesticide use, habitat loss and climate change. Bees particularly pollinate one or more cultivars of over 66% of the world's crop species and contribute to one third of the food we eat. It is estimated that 40% of the world's insect species are threatened with extinction.

## Most significant declines

While research is ongoing to pinpoint the exact extent of the issue in all parts of the world, the most significant declines have been documented in North America, northwestern Europe, and some regions of Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America which suggests that declines are occurring around the globe.

## Rise of the robots

Researchers and engineers from around the world have been experimenting with ways robots can do the work of real bees. Some fly around with propellers and use ionic liquid gel-coated horsehair bristles to collect and transfer pollen from one plant to another. Others have flexible wings powered by 'artificial muscles' and use an electrostatic patch to perch on just about anything. And some don't fly at all but instead roll on the ground and pollinate flowers by blasting them with pulses of air.

## Size of your fingernail

These micro-robots are the size of your fingernail and weigh a quarter of a honeybee. They will allow us to control their vibrations, pitch, force, and timing. They can simulate bees' interactions with flowers and allow us to understand how the characteristics of the bee, and how it buzzes, affect pollination.

## Power source

These robotic bees are powered by solar cells which generate five volts of electricity and a small onboard transformer turns it into the 200 volts

needed for the 'RoboBee' to lift off. That voltage causes the bee's piezoelectric actuators to bend and contract like the real insect's muscles would, leading to the flapping motion of the robot's wings at 120 beats per second. Its brain development is controlled by 'smart' sensors and electronics that mimic the eyes and antennae of a bee and can sense and respond dynamically to the environment.

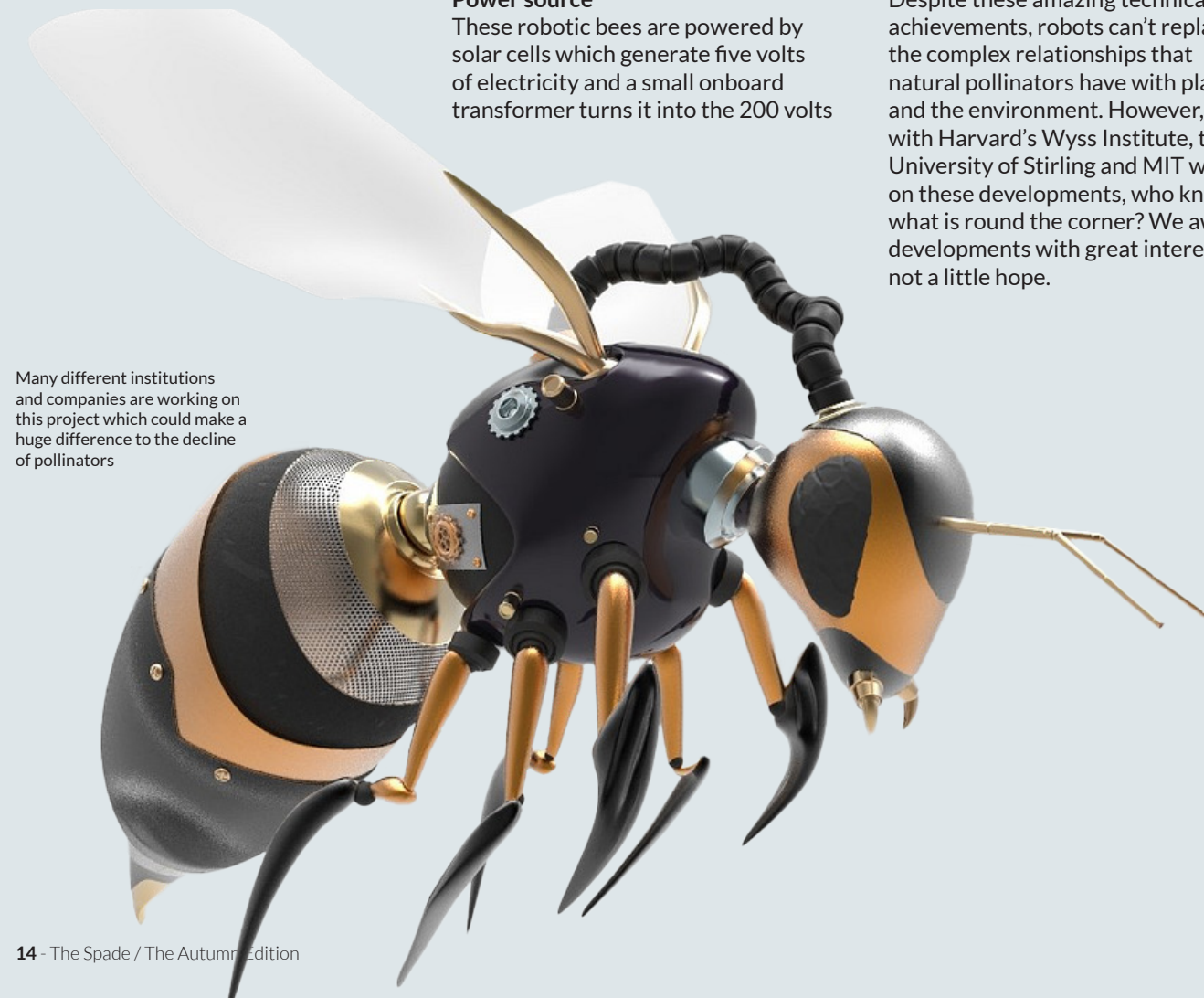
## It's (not) the real thing

Robotic pollinators could help solve this problem where real pollinators are in short supply. They could be especially useful in large-scale farming or in regions where pollinator populations have almost entirely collapsed. However, it is not without challenges; the best bug-sized robots are no match for natural pollinators like bees when it comes to endurance, speed, and manoeuvrability.

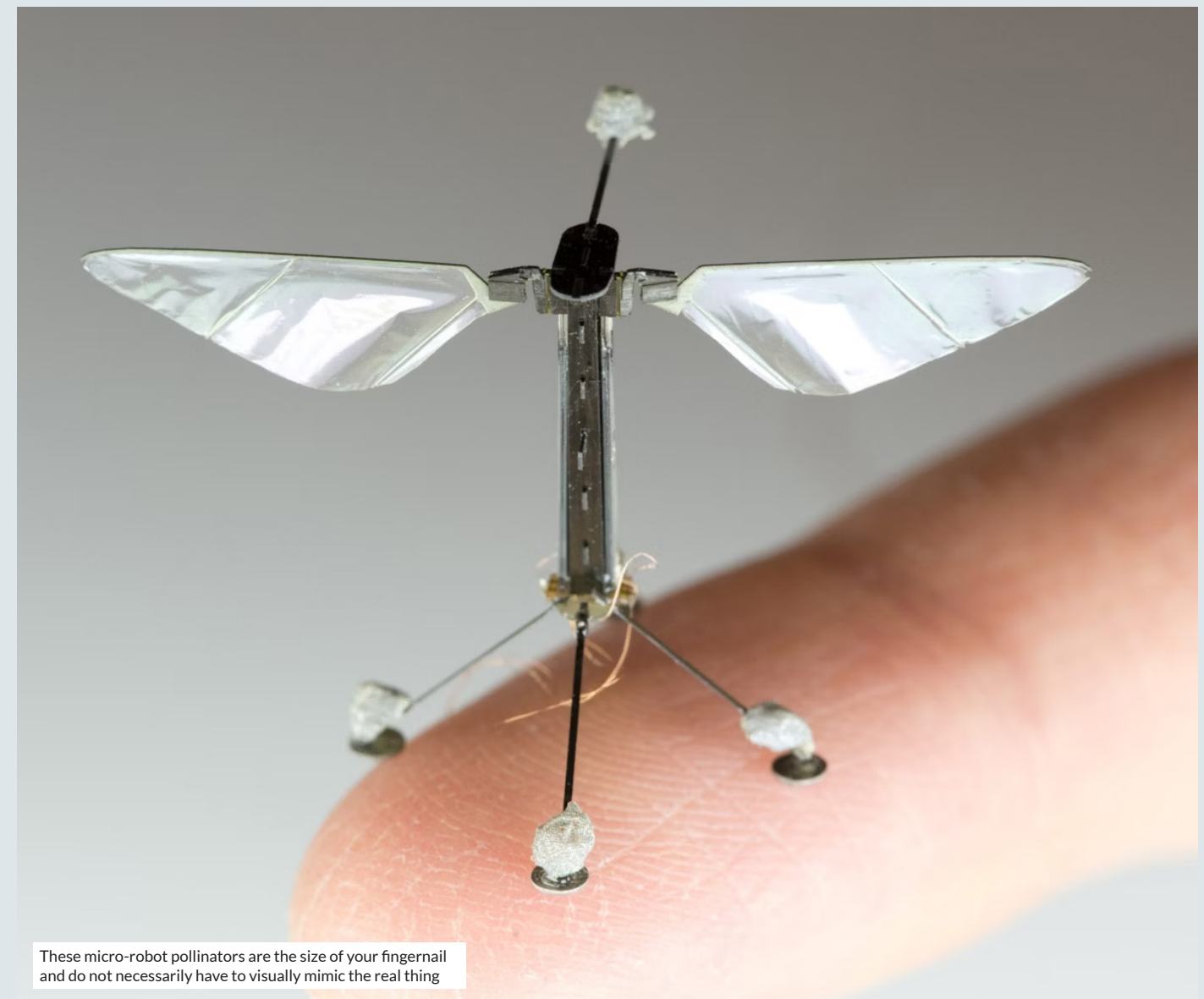
## The future?

Despite these amazing technical achievements, robots can't replace the complex relationships that natural pollinators have with plants and the environment. However, with Harvard's Wyss Institute, the University of Stirling and MIT working on these developments, who knows what is round the corner? We await developments with great interest and not a little hope.

Many different institutions and companies are working on this project which could make a huge difference to the decline of pollinators



Technically called pollination drones, the robots could potentially pollinate crops like real bees by carrying pollen from one plant to another, using sensors and cameras to detect the locations of the crops.



These micro-robot pollinators are the size of your fingernail and do not necessarily have to visually mimic the real thing



# CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE

It’s good, when I sit down to write a few words of introduction to the charity reports in The Spade, to be reminded of the variety of good causes the Gardeners’ Company’s charity supports. It depends on what our support is for, but often there is quite a time between us agreeing a grant and the charity undertaking the project – speaking for myself, time in which the memory of the application has often faded. Catching up on the good work that is being done with our support is a pleasure.

### Helping children

Three of today’s reports are of schemes which help children in very different ways. In Brent, our funding to the BANG project helps provide opportunities for children to learn about horticulture through the practical development of greenspace at their school. In urban communities, where many children are brought up in flats without access to gardens, the opportunity to discover gardening

at home, perhaps the beginning of a lifetime’s interest and even career, is missing. A more therapeutic approach, working with children and young people with autism, is adopted in Birmingham at the Martineau Gardens Therapeutic Horticulture Trust. Back in London the Jubilee Primary School used a small grant of £624, to tackle the all too frequent urban problems of traffic pollution and concrete by creating a living green wall to shield the school’s entrance from the road.

### Adults with Special needs

The sensory garden at the Fircroft Trust Wellbeing Hub, which was created using a grant of just under £5000 from your Charity, is being used by increasing numbers of people with exceptional needs, including learning disabilities. And over in Essex, Thurrock and District Mind have used our grant to extend the use of their garden by people experiencing mental health difficulties.

### A word on volunteers

In Thurrock, one of our own liverymen gave of his time and expertise in realising their project. More widely, we very much welcome applications where our financial help can complement the work of volunteers, whether from our own livery or volunteers from the local community. Please encourage smaller volunteer-led groups to apply, and don’t let them be put off by the form, downloadable for the Company’s website - a simple and clear outline of a worthwhile project is worth many paragraphs of a bid writer’s jargon. And thank you for your support to the Company’s own charity.



Richard Capewell,  
Charity Chairman

# ‘LIVING SCREEN’ FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

**In 2024 The Charity granted £624.52 to the Jubilee Primary School in Stoke Newington, with a high level of special needs children, to build a ‘Living Green Screen’.**

*“The school’s entrance is an ugly concreted area adjacent to a main road on which traffic has increased by 20%” explains Zoë Maxwell — one of the School’s PTA Trustees: “The aim of the ‘Living Green Screen’ is to literally screen-off the entrance, reduce the impact of pollution, and increase access to green spaces for the many children who do not have access to a garden at home.”*

### Diverse pupil base

Jubilee School services a highly diverse population (74% of pupils identify as black, Asian or other ethnic minority, with 36 languages spoken across the school) and with 15% of children classed as having Special Educational Needs (significantly higher than national average) and 26% of children eligible for the Pupil Premium Grant. Nine out of ten 10 pupils in the school have no garden.

### Plants established

Zoë continued: *“The planter took a little longer than anticipated to get built and happened later on in the summer term. In the end it was worth the wait and as we*

*have gone back to school the plants are more established and it is a very welcome sight. It’s planted with lots of herbs and climbing Jasmine.*

### Thank you

*“Though not in flower yet the herbs smell very welcoming, particularly on the rainy*

*mornings when the scent is released. I’m looking forward to the Jasmine flowering! Thank you so very much to members of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners for helping us improve the environment for our lovely Jubilee community and in particular the play area for reception children and the entrance.”*



The ‘Living Green Screen’ was planted by school staff with the children helping. The screen reduces the impact of pollution and creates a more attractive entrance to the school.

# PROJECT AT BRENT SCHOOL

**In 2024 The Company Charity granted £1,400 to the BANG (Building A New Generation) organisation for a project to teach children 13-15 years old in Brent about horticulture and its role in helping the environment**

The project at the Manor School, Brent, was to enable children of 13-15 years, some with special needs, to learn the importance of caring and taking responsibility for the natural environment by developing their horticultural skills and by transforming a green space within their school grounds. The sessions were conducted over a span of 12 weeks.

### Deprived of green spaces

In some areas of Brent one in four (25%) households have no access to a private or shared garden, increasing to 60% of households in an area of the Stonebridge ward. Many children and young people in Brent do not have opportunities to enjoy and care for nature and green spaces, due to accessibility issues or lack of financial resources. Some lack positive role models who can teach them how to look after a garden; which tools to use and how to grow plants.

### Improving their school grounds

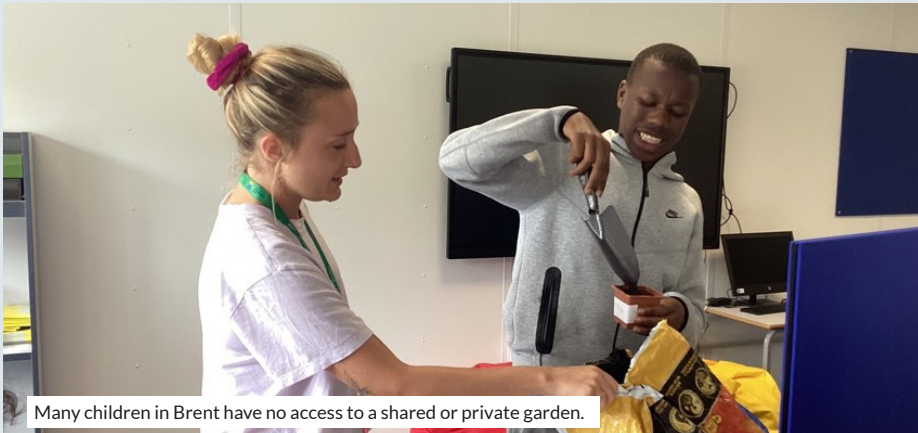
BANG provided children at a local secondary school with an opportunity to come together after school and transform a green space on the school site through eight nature-themed workshops. The workshops were thoughtfully structured to incorporate both hands-on experiences and educational components, fostering a holistic understanding of interconnectedness and the incorporation of sustainable living.

### Successful outcomes

The children gained knowledge, skills and hands-on experiences, enabling them to understand the importance of nature; cared for it through horticultural skills such as planting vegetables, flowers and herbs and caring for their local area; enjoyed activities outside of the classroom; enjoyed the physical, mental and social benefits nature brings; and learned about the key environmental issues that need to be tackled to create a better future for the planet and the community they are part of. The workshops encouraged a sense of community and belonging for a positive impact beyond the project.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Students learnt how to grow various fruits and vegetables.
- Students engaged with cleaning up the environment and cleared the school grounds of non-biodegradable waste.
- Students were responsible for their own fruits, vegetables and flowers which were successfully planted and pruned.
- Students worked together to create and decorate bug hotels, learning about the importance and value of every component of the local ecosystem.
- All students wanted to continue the programme.
- Students gained the desire to Improve Local Environment



Many children in Brent have no access to a shared or private garden.



They learnt to make bug hotels and discovered the vital importance of insects.



They learnt how to plant vegetables, flowers and herbs in their workshops.



# GARDENING PROJECT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In 2024 The Charity granted £1,500 to the Martineau Gardens Therapeutic Horticulture Project for young people whose neurodevelopmental differences or exclusion from education denies them access to traditional work experience

Martineau Gardens is a community garden in Edgbaston, Birmingham. It adjoins the Priory Hospital and features over two acres of woodland and formal gardens. Their Therapeutic Horticulture project provides horticulture skills and experience to young people whose neurodevelopmental differences or exclusion from education denies them access to traditional work experience.

## Two strands of programme

The programme comprises two strands: Students from local special schools, who visit weekly during the school term, in groups of 3-5. They are fully supported by staff and the tutors from the schools. The students engage in horticultural activities which are tailored to the individual ability levels of each participant. The second strand is supported work experience for young people aged 16-25, who have additional support needs.

## Developing transferable skills

The work takes place in our gardens, close to Birmingham city centre, and uses social and therapeutic horticulture to facilitate improved wellbeing and the development of transferable skills of those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Special Educational Needs. They

gain hands-on practical experience of plants and have opportunities to access further learning and volunteering opportunities in the future. They learn about how gardening can be carried out in an environmentally-sensitive, sustainable way and understand more about food growing.

## Impact

The young people who visit Martineau Gardens gain practical gardening skills, and the placements also allow them to engage in positive, confidence-building activities outside of their normal home and school environments. Owing to their expertise in working with vulnerable individuals through their established programme for adults, they are well-placed to provide this vital service. This fostering of mutual respect greatly helps the students to learn how to form positive relationships and better manage their emotional responses and behaviour towards others.

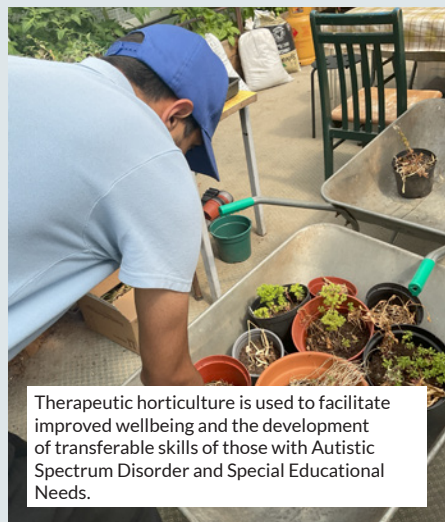
## School teacher's feedback

Here is some recent feedback from staff at one of the special schools who visit for bespoke weekly supported gardening sessions, namely Baskerville School which provides secondary

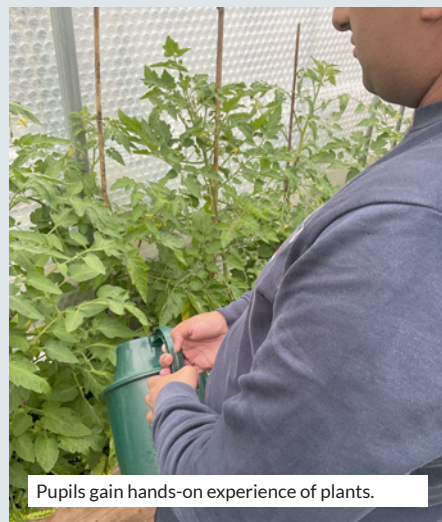
education for special needs students: *"Martineau Gardens is a place where our students can feel included, learn in a practical setting, and take part in a wider community. This has been an invaluable opportunity for our pupils to spend meaningful time outdoors in a safe and welcoming space. They love their time here and we can see a huge impact on their learning and behaviour as they work together on a range of tasks."*

## Student's feedback

They recently had a 14-year-old student carrying out a week's work experience placement with their in-house Therapeutic Horticulture groups, rather than weekly placements throughout the academic year. The student attends a mainstream school but has autism and suffers with anxiety: *"I liked being outdoors as it made me feel relaxed and took my mind off the stress of school. I was worried about meeting lots of new people at the gardens but everyone was very friendly. I felt that doing a physical task felt like I was actually making a difference for people who are going to use the gardens in the future. I particularly enjoyed cutting kindling as I learnt how to use an axe safely. I hope that other people get to experience the benefits of the gardens in the future."*



Therapeutic horticulture is used to facilitate improved wellbeing and the development of transferable skills of those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Special Educational Needs.



Pupils gain hands-on experience of plants.



One student said: "Doing a physical task felt like I was actually making a difference for people who are going to use the gardens".

# WELLBEING HUB SUPPORT

CHARITY



The Worshipful Company of Gardeners of London Charity gave a grant of £4,910, towards the creation of a sensory garden at the Fircroft Trust Wellbeing Hub in Surbiton, Surrey

Fircroft's Organisational Lead Damien Ellis explains: *"Our Charity, The Fircroft Trust, supports adults with learning disabilities, Autism, and/or mental health/emotional wellbeing support needs, in the local community. Your kind grant directly impacts these individuals, and all those who access the charity and access our garden area."*

## The project

The overall garden project is broken into four areas. These include the sensory garden (which WCoG funded), the central circular bed, the edible veg and herb beds, and the pond area. The sensory garden is used by all at Fircroft Trust, including people they support who access a day service which is for adults with autism, learning disabilities, and mental health needs.

## 'ManShed'

Part of the garden is also the base for 'ManShed' – a service funded by Fircroft which supports men locally experiencing social isolation and/or emotional wellbeing needs.

## Growing number of users

There are currently over 50 people with varying support needs who access the wellbeing hub as a day service who will be able to use the sensory area the Gardeners' Charity funded, with the majority of people accessing multiple times per week, and this number is growing. In addition, they have those who access 'ManShed', and people they support who come there often from their other site, Firs Court in Chessington, which has both a supported living service and a residential care service. So an increasing number will be able to enjoy the area the Charity has funded.

## Thank you

Damien Ellis commented: *"To give you a sense of the impact your grant for the sensory garden for those in need has had, I cannot overstate the impact of the amazing the work that has been done. A big thank you to The Worshipful Company of Gardeners, whose donation has made such a big difference to those we at Fircroft strive to help."*



The Charity's grant facilitated the creation of a sensory garden for their Wellbeing Hub.



More than 50 people with varying support needs will be able to benefit from the Fircroft Trust's Sensory Garden.

# LIGHTING FOR A THERAPY GARDEN

In 2025 The Worshipful Company of Gardeners' of London Charity granted £1,500 to provide lighting for a therapy garden to extend the hours which it is safe to use

Thurrock and Brentwood Mind supports individuals experiencing mental health difficulties and their families: from early intervention through to crisis support writes their CEO Wendy Robertson.

## Rationale for the therapy garden

*"During our work, both service users and staff expressed a strong need for a calming outdoor space for reflection before and after support sessions. We identified an unused plot of land at the rear of our premises and, with the generous support of Anthony Muldoon – a Liveryman in The Gardeners' Company – who volunteered his time and co-designed the garden alongside individuals with life experience of mental health challenges. Together we brought the vision of a Wellbeing Sensory Garden to life."*

*We are delighted to share that the garden is now complete."*

## Extending its use to evenings


*"The professional lighting financed by The Worshipful Company of Gardeners has not only enhanced the garden's appearance but also extended its usability into the evening, making it a safe and welcoming space at all hours for patients and staff."*

## Thank you

*"We are deeply grateful for the support of The Worshipful Company of Gardeners. Your contribution has helped create a space of healing, growth, and connection: one that will benefit many for years to come."*



The lighting system extends the use of the therapy garden into the evening.



UP AND COMING

## MANSION HOUSE BANQUET: FRIDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> FEB

Centrepiece of the Company year - a glittering event  
White tie preferred/Black tie accepted



# LADY MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LONDON

**Dame Susan Langley will formally take office on Friday 7th of November at the Silent Ceremony, with the Lady Mayor's Banquet being held later this year. Dame Susan Langley is the third woman in the history of the City of London Corporation to hold the office**

## **An honour to be elected**

The Lady Mayor said: *"It is a profound honour to be elected as Lady Mayor of the City of London. The Mayoralty plays a vital role in building relationships, convening leaders, and championing the UK's financial and professional services at home and abroad in the face of increasing competition. My priorities will be strengthening London's global leadership, enhancing its reputation, driving business growth, and ensuring the City makes a positive social impact and attracts the talent that it needs."*

## **A personal account**

Liverman Jeremy Storey-Walker attended the election and provides his account of the event: *"On Monday the 29th of September, I had the privilege of attending one of the City of London's great occasions: the election of Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley as Lady Mayor. From the moment I stepped into the Guildhall, the sense of ceremony was unmistakable. The air was filled with anticipation and pride."*

## **Captivating Spectacle**

*"The morning began with a procession, and I was immediately captivated by the spectacle. The Aldermen, Sheriffs, and Officers assembled in their gowns and regalia before stepping forward in ordered dignity. The procession was led by the Common Cryer, Serjeant-at-Arms, and City officers bearing the Mace and Sword,*

*followed by the Aldermen in their scarlet gowns. Behind them came the Masters of the Livery Companies, their colourful robes adding even greater splendour to the pageant. Watching them move in unison through the ancient hall, I was struck by how the ceremony connected the modern City of London to its deep historical roots. The gleam of chains of office, the sweep of gowns, and the hush of the gathered audience created a grand, moving scene."*

## **Heritage and continuity**

*"Once inside the Guildhall, the atmosphere intensified. The vaulted chamber, with its soaring architecture and centuries of history, seemed to magnify the solemnity of the event. As the Common Cryer and Serjeant-at-Arms opened proceedings with their time-honoured words, the sense of tradition was almost tangible. Then the Recorder addressed the Liverymen, reminding all present of the customs and responsibilities that have guided the City's governance for generations. It was a moment where heritage and continuity stood vividly before us. The announcement of the result was unforgettable. Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley had been duly elected Lady Mayor of London. For an instant, the room fell into a respectful hush, then came the applause — warm, generous, and heartfelt."*

## **Acceptance speech**

*"The Lady Mayor's acceptance speech was the highlight of the day. With composure*

*and conviction, she spoke of London as a city alive with talent, opportunity, and innovation. She urged the City to harness its diversity, to foster creativity, and to ensure that prosperity reaches far beyond the Square Mile. She spoke about the broader spirit of London itself: resilient, aspirational, and forward-looking."*

## **Reflection**

*"As I left the Guildhall, the echoes of ceremony still lingering, I knew I had witnessed something far more than civic pageantry. The scarlet gowns, the colourful robes of the Livery Masters, the formal declarations — all belonged to a cherished tradition. Yet the election of Dame Susan Langley showed how the City's proud heritage stands hand in hand with progress and inclusion."*

Dame Susan Langley  
is the Lady Mayor  
of London



# BOOK REVIEW: THE CITY UNLOCKED

**Ed. H. Esmonde & M. Willes, The City Unlocked:  
London Livery Companies from Wool to Digital, 2025**

The book's editors asked Companies to choose an object which embodied their history. Beginning in Medieval London, with the trades of the Weavers, Bakers and Goldsmiths, through the expansion of the 16th and 17th centuries and the new mechanised trades of the Industrial Revolution, up to the professions of the present day. The history of the City of London through portraits of the individual Livery Companies can be traced. The dried botanical sample of

Fairchild's Mule in the Natural History Museum was chosen by the Archivist for the Gardeners' Company, and we had the honour of it being chosen to illustrate the promotional material for the book.

**Profile Books, £17.50 to order only for members of Companies via this link:**  
<https://profileeditions.com/product/city-unlocked/>

