



THE SPADE

AUTUMN COURT
DINNER WITH THE
WAX CHANDLERS

THE CORONATION
BANQUET AT
GUILDHALL

VIEW FROM
THE CITY:
AI STARDUST

CHARITY UPDATE:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE



DATES FOR
YOUR DIARY

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THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF GARDENERS



Welcome to the Autumn Spade. Written contributions, ideas for articles and help in gathering material and preparing it for publication are always very welcome.

Do visit our recently refreshed website. The public or first page features a steady stream of news stories about the Company, events in the City and other items of interest in the horticulture and gardening worlds. Click on the News button. Next to it are the links to our Twitter and Instagram accounts. Please send photographs for posting there to Assistant Barbara Segall.

www.instagram.com/gardenliveryco

THE MASTER
Nicholas Woolf OBE KStJ

RENTER WARDEN
Alderman Robert Howard

SPADE EDITOR
John Gilbert

UPPER WARDEN
Cindy Peck

SPADEBEARER
David Balfour

CHARITY EDITOR
Garry Coward-Williams



THE CLERK - OLLIE FINN

07947 794 613 | clerk@gardenerscompany.org.uk

The Worshipful Company of Gardeners, PO Box 79415, London N7 1HD
(The Office is open Monday–Wednesday)

A MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

Dear Fellow Gardeners, our members have a wide variety of different gardens, but Philippa Burrough's must be in a special category of its own. Our visit in late August was a delight and was very well supported.

For me the highlight of the early weeks of my year must be the joint visit with the Wax Chandlers to my wife Fiona's home town of Edinburgh. The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh pulled out all the stops for a very memorable visit. All multi-day trips require a great deal of advance preparation for them to run smoothly; good weather helped as well.

On the personnel side our new Clerk, Ollie Finn, has slipped seamlessly into the seat and has impressed members with the speed with which he is getting to grips with the complexity of the Gardeners' Company. We have also recruited a new assistant clerk, Abbie Jones, to complement Ollie and help speed up our administrative processes.

Our long-standing Chaplain, Senior Past Master the Venerable Peter Delaney, advised us that it was time he also retired. We are pleased that Fr Jack Noble, Priest in Charge of St Giles Cripplegate, has become the Company Chaplain and we expect to see him on various occasions throughout the year and also to use his church for Harvest Festival, the Fairchild Lecture and other events. And we are not finished yet, because in the New Year we will need to appoint a new Beadle following the impending retirement of Chris Hanrahan.

There are a few tweaks to the diary in the New Year. Please study the updated version in this edition of the

Spade compared to the Yearbook. They include a date change (Fairchild), a venue change (Spring Court Lunch), an additional online presentation and two new events, to take advantage of opportunities.

The story of the Coronation Planters goes on. On 10th October three of us visited the Plumbers' Company facility at the Amberley Museum in West Sussex to cast the Company coat of arms in lead to go on the ends of our planter. The Master Plumber did the same for his planter. And for light relief we had casts of our own hands made as well! We will keep you updated; delivery to Sandringham is hoped to be early in the New Year.

On matters Royal the City's highlight in mid October was the Mansion House Banquet in the presence of the King and Queen to mark the contribution of the civic institutions of the City of London to the Coronation of Their Majesties the King and Queen.

Our last outdoor event for the year was a visit to Nymans Gardens in West Sussex, including a very sociable ploughman's lunch. Now

we turn our attention both indoors and online. The recent Autumn Court Dinner at Wax Chandlers' Hall was a very convivial occasion (see report page 5). Our traditional Christmas Carols Service will be held at St Vedast Foster Lane, followed by dinner at Goldsmiths' Hall. Our annual Mansion House Banquet will be held on 9th February. Over the winter there will be lots of interest online with a global flavour from Hawaii to Patagonia and more.

Finally I am looking forward to receiving the Company's Strategic Review from the group led by the Renter Warden Robert Howard. They have been busy talking to members and a member survey has recently been sent out. One feature that is already clear is the need to boost our membership numbers; these have declined recently, not unconnected I am sure with the Covid pandemic. It's in all our interests to recruit new members and we are focused on streamlining the processing of applications.

Early Christmas greetings to everyone.

Nicholas Woolf



The Master and Consort at the October Mansion House Banquet with the Anointing Screen in the background. The screen was gifted by the City Corporation and participating livery companies and made by the Royal School of Needlework. Photograph Gerald Sharp.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

New dates will be added during the year. The Trowel and other circulars from the Clerk will provide further details. The Master may vary eligibility to events. Liverymen and partners will take precedence where numbers are limited.

DATE	EVENT AND DRESS	VENUE AND INFORMATION	ELIGIBILITY
Wed 15th November 2023	THE LINNEAN SOCIETY LECTURE Smart casual attire	Dr Jonathan Drori, will talk about his book Around the World in 80 plants. There will also be tours of the treasures of the Linnean Society followed by supper.	The Company, partners and guests
Thurs 30th November 2023	COMPANY VIRTUAL EVENT- MY JOURNEY THROUGH THE PALMS	Robin Clark, recently resident in Kauii, will discuss the establishment and maintenance of his gardens.	The Company and partners
Wed 6th December 2023	CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND DINNER Lounge suit/equivalent	This year we will be joining the Wax Chandlers’ Company for Christmas carols at St Vedast Church followed by dinner at Goldsmiths’ Hall.	The Company, partners and guests
Mon 18th December 2023	TRADESCANT COURT LUNCH Lounge suit/equivalent	Our annual Court lunch to celebrate the Tradescants and their contribution to horticulture. Ironmongers’ Hall.	Court only
Thurs 11th January 2024	COMPANY VIRTUAL EVENT- THE GARDENS OF NORTHERN IRELAND	In June Liveryman Trevor Edwards will lead the Company visit to Strangford Lough. He will give us a taste of that visit.	The Company and partners
Thurs 25th January 2024	COMPANY CATCH UP ONLINE	Focusing on the Company’s Strategic Review.	The Company and partners
Fri 9th February 2024	MANSION HOUSE BANQUET White Tie preferred	The Company’s traditional annual banquet. We will be inviting the Wax Chandlers’ Company to join us.	The Company, partners and guests
Thurs 22nd February 2024	COMPANY VIRTUAL EVENT – HAMPTON COURT HISTORY	A repeat of Dr Terry Gough’s talk on the history of the gardens at the October Discovery Day.	The Company, partners and guests
Tue 12th March 2024	COMPANY VIRTUAL EVENT- FLOWER HUNTING IN PATAGONIA	David Haselgrove, Past President of the Alpine Garden Society, is a frequent visitor to Patagonia in search of its rare flowers.	The Company and partners
Date TBC	COMPANY VIRTUAL EVENT – GARDENERS’ QUESTION TIME	Liveryman David Domoney is once again our host.	The Company and partners
Tue 9th April 2024	COMPANY CATCH UP ONLINE	A look forward to the Spring and Summer visits and a general update.	The Company and partners
Tue 16th April 2024	PACKWOOD HOUSE & BADDESLEY CLINTON Comfortable attire	The first of three spring garden visits is to Packwood House and Baddesley Clinton, two adjacent properties in Warwickshire. B94 6AT and B93 0DQ.	The Company, partners and guests
Tue 23rd April 2024	MALVERLEYS Comfortable attire	The second of three Spring Garden visits is to Malverleys in Hampshire, redesigned by Head Gardener Mat Reese.	The Company, partners and guests
Thurs 25th April 2024	SPRING COURT LUNCH Lounge suit/equivalent	This is a lunch rather than a dinner in order to provide variety. Venue to be confirmed.	The Company, partners and guests
Sun 12th May 2024	CLAREMONT VISIT AND MASTERS’ LUNCH Comfortable attire	The Master and the Master Wax Chandler invite both Companies to lunch in their garden, which also has direct access to Claremont Landscape Garden (NT). Wyngates, Portsmouth Road, Esher KT10 9JA.	The Company, partners and guests
Thurs 16th May 2024	BIDDULPH GRANGE GARDEN Comfortable attire	The third of three Spring Garden visits is to Biddulph Grange, a fascinating National Trust property.	The Company, partners and guests
Tue 21st May 2024	THE FAIRCHILD LECTURE Lounge suit/equivalent	The Company’s traditional Fairchild lecture will be given in St Giles Cripplegate. Followed by supper.	The Company, partners and guests
Sun-Thurs 2nd – 6th June 2024	STRANGFORD LOUGH, NORTHERN IRELAND Comfortable attire. Jacket and tie/equivalent for evenings	A four-day visit to Northern Ireland’s finest gardens around Strangford Lough. Liveryman Trevor Edwards will act as our guide. throughout the visit.	The Company, partners and guests
Tue 11th June 2024	COMPANY CATCH UP ONLINE	A look forward to the next Master’s events.	The Company and partners
Wed 12th June 2024	THE COMPANY GOLF DAY Golf attire, change for dinner	The Company’s Golf Day will be held at the Master’s Golf Club, Malden Golf Club.	The Company, partners and guests
Thurs 20th June 2024	CITY ROOF GARDENS Comfortable attire	SPM Nick Evans will lead a tour of the gardens at the top of some of the City’s new skyscraper buildings.	The Company, partners and guests
Thurs 27th June	MUNSTEAD WOOD Comfortable attire	The National Trust acquired Gertrude Jekyll’s house and gardens in spring 2023. This is a special private tour.	The Company, partners and guests

A COMBINED AUTUMN COURT DINNER PROVES A DELIGHTFUL EXPERIENCE

A new experience awaited us at the Autumn Court Dinner at the Wax Chandlers’ Hall on the 24th October 2023. The Hall holds a maximum of 75 diners, thus providing us all with a relaxed and stimulating opportunity to move easily between people and the possibility to speak with most of the attendees, as well as to linger and enjoy the ambience.

It was interesting also to learn from two of the overseas prize-winners why they chose this country to undertake their training. When asked the response was immediate and with complete sincerity: England is the home of gardening.

Of course, the sentiment expressed by our award winners was before us in the form of the table decorations; they were superb, matching the season and much in demand at the end of the evening. The florist responsible was Karen Woolvern who provides the arrangements to the Wax Chandlers.

During the course of the evening, beautifully lit by table candelabra with authentic candles, the Master introduced us to this year’s prize winners congratulating them on their achievements. He also welcomed Fredy Eschbach as the Company’s first Overseas Affiliate, admitted at the earlier Court meeting (*see below).

Assistant Mike Fitt introduced us all to our speaker, Andy Jasper, Director of Gardens and Parklands at the National Trust. Andy has pursued his love of nature, gardening and its science all over the word.

He provided an intriguing overview of the work of the National Trust and his varied and worldwide expertise. Much to our surprise, he told us

that the National Trust has 700 plus employees including 30 apprentices, numbers which he has ambition to increase. He also reminded us that gardening was a work of the present that was directed at the future.

We were introduced to the Master Wax Chandler, our Master’s consort, Dame Fiona Woolf, who gave us all a fascinating insight into the Hall and some of the paintings that surrounded us as we dined.

Prize winners.
Royal Park Guilds Emma Louise Andrews; **Royal Botanic Gardens Kew** Svenja Jührend & Francesco Gorni; **RHS Wisley** James Lidgett & Rachael Collings; **Capel Manor**

Karen Georgiou & Anna Bent; **Writtle** Dan Jones & Grace Lynch; **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** Tim Lambert.

Report by Dr Sid Sullivan

*Alfred (Fredy) Eschbach was Clerk of the Gardeners of Basel, (formed in 13th Century), for 18 years. His first contact with our Company was when Norman Chalmers was Master in 1994. Fredy has attended many Banquets at Mansion House, taken part in several Gardeners’ outings and been instrumental in our Gardeners’ tours around Basel. Several Past Masters are good friends of his.



HOW THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE REVOLUTION SPRINKLES ITS STARDUST

The office has been through one revolution already this decade. Covid lockdowns fast forwarded the idea of remote working and required businesses to install online meeting and communication technology. Employees had to be furnished with computers for their homes and good links into their offices. Now the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution will build on that, allowing changes to job specifications and enhancements to the way people carry them out. Many staff members will be able to call on a digital assistant to carry out tasks and prompt their responses. All of this is good news for the futures of the big three AI giants.

Microsoft burst AI onto the world with its launch of Chat GPT and its investment in the company. The stardust we saw earlier this year certainly has worked so far for them in helping their overall net income, cash and revenue growth. With first quarter results this month showing a gain of 26% in net income, it was in no doubt what was powering its growth. It stated: We are rapidly infusing AI across every layer of the tech stack and for every role and business process to drive productivity gains for our customers. With co-pilots we are making the age of AI real for people and businesses everywhere.

Alphabet's Google also produced impressive net income growth of 41% over the same quarter last year, with revenues up 11%. It too wanted to remind us of the role of AI. It said AI was driving innovation across search, YouTube, the cloud, its Pixel devices, and more.

Amazon Web Services remains a crucial player in this area. Amazon tells us it has entered a strategic

collaboration to advance generative AI with Anthropic.

AI expansion goes hand in hand with expansion of cloud computing. Alphabet, Microsoft and Amazon between them account for around two-thirds of the cloud services market. They provide much of the property and technical installations to offer companies access to data storage and processing away from their own offices, run by data professionals. This has been fast growing, with the likelihood of more to come as many businesses adopt more AI assistance and require more data capacity to handle it.

It is likely AI will grow quickly, as it will be seen by employees as a good tool to make their working lives easier as well as being seen by managers as a way to enhance productivity. It is more likely to be introduced gradually, with the productivity gains in many cases affecting future recruitment levels rather than leading directly to redundancies. There will also be a wish to harness it to enhance quality and to expand business activities by sharpening customer service and sales and marketing activities.

The phrase the co-pilot implies support and assistance rather than some digital demon out to take your job. Many employees will themselves be interested in whether a digital assistant can retrieve data and information, help process it and talk to computers in ways which offer real help and take some of the drudgery out of working on a computer.

The three market leaders are using these services to get access to a wide range of business partners, peering into the details of how

they run their companies and offering ways to improve their record keeping, data handling and management information. They have different charging models. Google relies more on advertising revenues whilst Microsoft charges clients for software packages and use.

AI services are often offered initially for free, but then enhanced packages and better services are offered for a subscription or for user charges based on page use or time. They will become a built-in business cost, part of the revenue expenses of computing that a typical business now has as an essential feature of its cost budgets

The three AI and cloud companies are battling it out to see who can advance it farthest and fastest and who can take more of the market. These remain stocks that are in the clouds, where people are now arguing whether high flying Cirrus clouds have become lower flying cumulus or stratus. By any observation the growth rates are still impressive for such large groups. AI developments have much further to run, though there will be share price retreats from time to time as people ask if the prices are expecting too much and as they wait for the growth to catch up with the shares.



ROBERT HOWARD'S VIEW FROM THE CITY

FIZZ, JAZZ, BIRDSONG AND A SPECTACULAR CORONATION BANQUET AT GUILDHALL

Guildhall played host in May to the spectacular Future Gardeners Coronation Banquet, a black tie extravaganza that raised the profile of the charity across the City and raised £25,000 for the project.

Guildhall was transformed for the evening. Around 180 guests arrived in the Print Room to a welcome of champagne, jazz and bird song, in the form of a half-hour piece suggested by David Domoney, Garden Bird Ambassador for the RSPB and Ambassador for Pollinating London Together (PLT).

The Old Library itself was transformed. Assistant Stephen Crisp had worked his customary magic with British grown seasonal flowers adorning tables named after flowers one might expect to see in the King's Coronation meadows as well as being commonly used in gardens. Sixteen surrounding trees, generously provided by Past Master Paul Rochford, represented the cohort of 16 newly graduated Future Gardeners students - the 'FG16'.

In an evening of themes, we were treated to a delicious dinner with a very British sustainability theme. A jazz quintet from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama played before and during the dinner, the music selection drawn from the era of the earlier Coronation years of Edward VII, George V and Edward VIII.

The Future Gardeners is very much a collaborative effort between the Livery, Royal Parks Guild and Bankside Open Spaces Trust, and we were delighted to welcome so many guests from the latter two partner organisations. Pollinating London Together took a table, and the Future Gardeners were pleased

to see so many other Liveries represented on the night, including the Farmers, Educators, Information Technologists, Security Professionals, Plumbers, Butchers, Watermen and Lightermen, International Bankers and Wax Chandlers. RHS Head of Horticultural Relations, Chris Moncrieff, was also in attendance.

Senior Past Master and Hon Almoner Tom Gough opened proceedings with a prayer written by him especially for the occasion, after which Senior Past Master Daniel Caspi began the speeches by welcoming us all to the Banquet and introducing the Future Gardeners and its recent achievements.

During dinner, we heard from Assistant Mike Fitt and Helen Firminger, former Director of Bankside Open Spaces Trust, about the critical difference

Future Gardeners makes to the lives of those who most need its help.

We were most fortunate to have as our after-dinner speaker David Domoney, who spoke inspiringly about the human connection with nature. In a bravura double act, David then steered us through an auction consisting of prizes most generously donated by the Livery.

The Master John Gilbert closed proceedings by thanking everyone for coming and spoke for us all when he gave sincere thanks to the many organisers – too many to name here, but a special thanks should go to organisers Liveryman Jenny Bolton Clark and SPM Daniel Caspi, for their tireless efforts in making the Banquet such a great success, much enjoyed by all.

Report by Jenny Bolton-Clark



Liveryman Adrienne Waterfield's successful bid at the auction led to an exhilarating ride through central London on Gary Mills's splendid Harley Davidson. She writes: On a hot sunny day we started across the Serpentine, past Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament to Embankment. Then to the Harley Davidson shop on Kings Road and lunch at a pub on the river. We then went through the City to see Daniel Caspi in Hatton Garden and home. What an experience!. Photograph Daniel Caspi.

EXPLORING THE HOME OF CHARLES AND EMMA ‘MISS SLIP-SLOP’ DARWIN

What do you think of when you hear Darwin’s name? An extraordinary Victorian scientist who developed the theory of evolution through natural selection, a rather severe-looking bearded gentleman, a person with chronic digestive problems? You will find all this at English Heritage’s Down House in Kent, which was the Darwin family home for over 40 years, but also so much more, as a party of 30 Gardeners found to their delight on their day visit with Master John Gilbert on 17th June.

The multi-layered facets of all aspects of the life of Darwin and his large family (10 children, although only seven surviving to adulthood) were brought vividly to light by the hugely knowledgeable guides on the four different tours thoughtfully planned by Katarina Heldring-Morris together with Ray Heaton, ecologist and volunteer at Down House.

The tours covered the garden, the house, the greenhouse/laboratory and the Sand Walk/Thinking Path. We were regaled with many interesting stories. Darwin, wanting to gain some privacy at the front of the house but not wanting to lose the view, simply lowered the road and then used the spoil to make mounds and provide some topography in the garden.

The house, having been bought for £2,150 in 1843 was extensively remodelled by Darwin to accommodate his growing family and 11-12 faithful servants, including two gardeners. The key spaces for Darwin were his Study, the furnishings of which have been retained today, and the Drawing Room where the family spent many happy hours playing games and making music.

Huge climbers adorn the back of the house, and there is a gnarled mulberry tree from which the children used to climb into the house. The 15-acre plot was the perfect backdrop for Darwin to conduct his many experiments, several continuing to this day, such as the Worm Stone (this drops about 2mm a year, showing that worms move some 15 tons of soil per acre per annum!), the Weed Plot (survival of the fittest) and Lawn Plot (biodiversity). Darwin’s other experiments with worms included placing them on the drawing room piano to explore their sensitivity to vibration.

Six formally-planted rectangular beds grace the garden behind the house and are complemented by the Mound and wide mixed ‘mingle’ borders, the brainchild of Darwin’s wife Emma, an accomplished woman (spoke three languages, and known as Miss Slip-Slop) and a keen gardener. Emma also maintained detailed records of household purchases over 50 years and a recipe book which has since been published.

Walking from the borders, we came to the greenhouse (full of orchids and carnivorous plants) and laboratory (containing a beehive and where Darwin conducted his experiments on how seeds float and thus reach new islands), pausing by the third-of-an-acre kitchen garden, where Darwin made many more observations. A magnificent wildflower border skirts the greenhouse, with poppies, cornflowers and camomile daisies.

The meadows around the garden are variously managed with different mowing regimes to encourage biodiversity; there is much yellow rattle in evidence, while orchids are making a comeback. In between the tours, we feasted on delicious cakes/scones and a superb buffet lunch, during which we heard about Emma and Henrietta (Etty) Darwin from Elizabeth Rollinson, and the stain-glassed window that Dame Marion Rowe (who lives down the road in Darwin’s aunt’s house) has conceived for the church in Downe village.

Report by Elizabeth Rollinson



Ecologist and Down House volunteer Ray Seaton describes Darwin’s kitchen garden experiments, some of which are carried on today. Photograph John Gilbert.

THE MASTER’S TRIP TO THE GARDENS OF YORK AND YORKSHIRE

We gathered at our York Hotel for dinner on the first night of our June adventure and were given an amusing and entertaining welcome to Yorkshire by our guest for the evening, Sir Rodney Brooke, an old friend of Master John Gilbert’s Consort Lynne and former CEO of West Yorkshire County Council and of Westminster City Council.

Our first full day in York was a visit to Bishopthorpe Palace, the Archbishop of York’s home downstream from the Minster. Head Gardener Garry O’Reagan led us through the grounds. We saw amazing trees from the late Victorian era including two Wellingtonias planted by the Prince of Wales in 1866 and a stunning Golden Elm.

The Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell welcomed us to his Palace and we all attended Eucharist, led by him in the Chapel, the oldest part of the palace, built in 1241. Stephen had a very prominent part in the Queen’s funeral and the recent Coronation. Lunch was followed by a very interesting tour of the palace.

In the evening we were treated to a reception and talk in the extraordinary Great Hall of the Company of Merchant Adventurers of the City of York. Their hall is the largest timber-framed building in the UK, most of it dating from 1357.

The third day was spent at Breezy Knees Gardens. Colin Parker and his wife Marylen established the 25-acre garden 25 years ago on exposed arable land with a number of oaks. They started with a framework of trees, hedges, and shrubs to alleviate the effect of the harsh winds coming off the Moors and the North Sea - hence the name Breezy Knees. They have planted over 7,000 different shrubs, trees and flowers.

The fourth day began at the Arium Glass House near Leeds. The three-acre glasshouse was built by Leeds City Council to provide bedding plants, shrubs and trees for the city’s parks, gardens and green spaces and other councils, private contractors, and stately homes.

Leeds is one of the most floral cities in the country and has a very good

reputation for its commitment to sound environmental practice. The nursery has a very sophisticated mechanical and automated potting and watering system: all water used is collected from the roofs.

After lunch we moved on to the Perennial garden at York Gate. This stunning one-acre garden, developed in an Arts and Craft style, was created by the Spencer family in 1951 to bring learning and pleasure to others. Jack Ogg, the Head Gardener, showed us the very well-established garden which has a unique collection of garden rooms.

Our final day took us to Scampston Walled Garden. Set in the Capability Brown grounds of Scampston Hall, the Walled Garden was established by Piet Oudolf in 1999, creating 12 varied and interesting rooms. Head Gardener Andy Karavics gave us a great insight into the layout and planting. The garden remains the designer’s largest private commission in the UK and has matured beautifully.

Report by Camilla King & Kate Jones



York Gate, Perennial’s garden gem near Leeds. Photograph John Gilbert.

BRAVE GOLFERS DESCEND ON ESSEX

This year, the talented Gardener Golfers - so talented yet so pure of spirit that LIV couldn't hire - showed both bravery and open-mindedness in taking the show to Essex in May.

On the appointed date the nomads descended upon West Essex Golf Club. On arrival, taking one look at the hill up the 18th, they decided it was wise to prepare not on the practice range, but in seeking extra sustenance in the form of Bacon Rolls.

Lest they got lost in the wilds of Epping Forest each group were sent out with a local guide, aka a Member. There were three teams who recorded noteworthy and particularly competitive scores.

First out were Nicholas Woolf, Jon Adams and Sherpa Steve Holloway. Local Steve's advice and guidance helped Nicholas win the nearest the

pin competition. Congratulations for a fine shot to a tiny green. They were followed by Ron Froud whose reputation meant the club felt he needed to be chaperoned by two West Essex Members: Peter Moore, this year's Seniors Captain, and Jim Barclay.

Jim was our guest of honour as a Past Master of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners. Close observers of the Remembrance Service will have observed him laying a wreath.

However the winners on the day were Chris Adams, David Balfour, Tony Muldoon and our fine organiser Richard Bernhard, all of whom are far too modest to boast or to claim bragging rights. Now the rest of the Company knows who won. OK!

Other congratulations to Jon and Chris Adams who separately

recorded fine 2's on Frying Pan hole. But we are left with the thought that finally sending the pair out in separate teams, this year's results reveal where the talent really lies! The assembled company enjoyed swapping such observations over a fine meal afterwards. Another memorable day, thank you Richard.

Next year Master Nicholas Woolf is hosting us at Malden GC near Kingston. On **12th June 2024** we will be combining forces with the Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers and the Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers.

Please put **Wednesday 12th June 2024** in the Diary now.

Report by Tony Muldoon.

THE DIARY OF A MASTER GARDENER

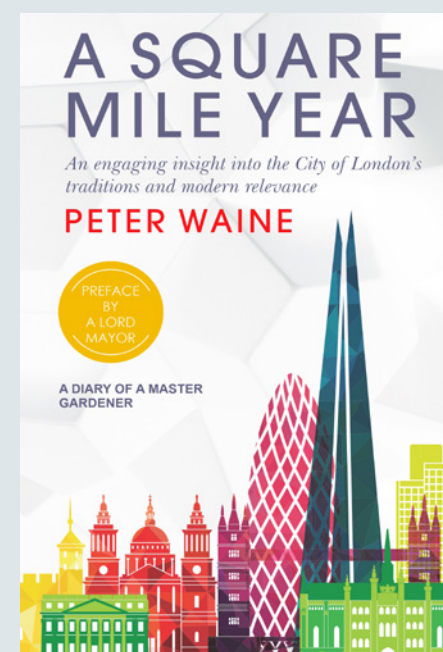
Past Master Peter Waine has published a highly personal account of his year as Master Gardener.

Written in a spontaneous diary form, A Square Mile Year charts his adventures through the myriad events that demand the Master's attention and keep him or her perpetually busy: Company events and business, City events, some jolly, others steeped in solemnity and tradition, innumerable receptions and formal dinners and more glasses of sparkling wine than are probably advisable.

Those who have heard Peter speak at Company dinners and other occasions will know that he is

a great raconteur with a gift for comedy and these qualities are evident in the book. There are lots of humorous anecdotes and wry asides, often self-deprecatory.

A strength of the book is that it gives members who only see the Master at Company events a glimpse of what, for one glorious year, he or she gets up to in the wider world of the City and the Livery.



CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Grant applications to our Charity continue apace. After the Trustees have accepted the Charity accounts for the year June 2022 - 2023, they will be posted on the Company website, writes David Aitchison-Tait.

Total number of grants

I want to give you an idea of just how your donations have been spent in 2023. We gave a total of 32 grants of which 17 came under our category of small grants: those below £1,500. These small grants are considered and voted on by email, monthly. We believe that if an organisation requires a relatively small amount, then they don't want to wait for possibly up to six months, for a decision at one of our two meetings per year.

Larger grants

The other 15 grants were for sums ranging from £1,900 to £10,000. Some of these are commitments over three years, the maximum time we support a project. Both Thrive and Horatio's Garden are examples of these and have had articles in previous editions of the Spade's Charity pages. The final category of grants is for the prizes given out to students at the Company's Autumn dinner.

Total sum granted

With your donations and income from our investments we were able to grant just over £90,000 in the year. On behalf of the Charity trustees, I would like to thank you for your continuing generosity.

How grants are spent

One of the smaller charities receiving a grant recently sent us a video link, which I am sharing with you: <https://shorturl.at/dFGL2> The charity is called Herefordshire Growing Point and they use horticultural therapy to get people back into work. This video gives you a good idea of how a grant is spent helping the less fortunate.

New Trustees

Finally, an update on the Charity's trustees, two of whom came to the end of their term: Roger Hedgecoe, who some of you may remember was the donation trustee and Steve Dowbiggin. They are replaced by Angela Evans and Richard Capewell.

CONTRIBUTING TO LONDON ZOO'S COMMUNITY GARDEN SCHEME

In June this year the Worshipful Company of Gardeners of London Charity granted £2,000 to the Zoological Society of London to help fund two projects.

One is a work experience scheme for 14 Year 10 students from Camden and Westminster focusing on ethnic minorities, those with disabilities and from low-income households. They do a two-week placement with the horticulture team, helping with the growth and upkeep for plants required for the zoo's attractions. The aim is that some will go on to a career in horticulture.

The second project is to help fund the zoo's community garden volunteer scheme to support those with poorer physical and mental health, who are less likely to spend time outside and less likely to be

employed. Charity Chairman David Aitchison-Tate, Secretary Helen Potts and Communications Officer Garry Coward-Williams visited the zoo and were given a tour around the nurseries, the community

gardens where they met some of the volunteers and inside the Giants of the Galapagos exhibit, where they were able to see how the horticultural team created the environment for its giant tortoises.



Representatives of the WCOG are flanked by members of the ZSL gardening team in the Community Garden



INNER LONDON ORGANIC FARM GETS A NEW COMPOSTING SET-UP



A £5,000 grant helped Sitopia Farm to construct purpose-built compost bins and educate students on composting techniques.

Just off the A2, only a few miles from the Blackwall Tunnel lies Sitopia, inner London's largest horticultural farm (2 acres) where a small core of paid staff, supported by dedicated volunteers, are growing organic vegetables, fruit and flowers as part of their mission to make a healthy and sustainable food system a reality, writes WCOG Charity Secretary Helen Potts.

Initial grant to fund trainer

The Charity made a grant of £1,500 to the farm in 2022 to fund a part-time social impact coordinator whose role was to train over 100 community volunteers in organic, regenerative horticultural techniques. The volunteer's testimonials are a tribute to the success of the training, with many going on to grow their own food and flowers and

many regulars travelling across London to work here with others in the open air.

Veg bags

More than 80 people are regular subscribers to the Veg Bags produced entirely on site. Seasonal produce and Hyperlocal are key words, especially if you want your veg bag delivered. Others subscribe for organic cut flower bouquets, with Sitopia Farm now branching out into fulfilling orders for wedding flowers, which include flowering herbs for added interest and scent, following ancient classical traditions.

Grant to fund compost facility

Earlier this year The Gardener's Charity made a further grant of £5,000 to pay for the construction of purpose-built compost bins. I saw them already being put to good use. This will enable the farm to produce efficiently better quality compost on site rather than buying in the materials

needed to ensure large, healthy crops on their no-dig beds. Founder and lead gardener Chloë Dunnet and her team are extremely grateful to the Company for their support.

Quality produce

I was treated to a fascinating tour of the site, including the polytunnels where I tasted the best strawberry I've eaten all year, crunchy celery with a flavour that reminded me how bland supermarket produce has become, and deliciously peppery salad greens. Companion planting dissuades natural predators and green manures are grown in tired beds.

Pop-up shop

A farm pop-up shop is held on the second Saturday of each month from May to October if you are in the Shooters Hill area. Unfortunately I don't live close by! One-day courses for organic and no-dig gardening take place through the summer too. To find out more visit www.sitopiafarm.com



The polytunnels are packed with delicious produce



Helen Potts (left) with founder and lead gardener Chloë Dunnet next to the purpose-built composting area

GRANT TO HELP SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES



The Worshipful Company of Gardeners of London Charity granted £1,500 to the Holly Lodge Centre in Richmond Park to support gardening sessions for children with learning disabilities

Anna King of Holly Lodge provides an update:

Supported by your kind grant, this academic year we will have provided 19 gardening workshops to young people with severe learning disabilities at a local specialist school. Each week the school brought up to 11 young people, rotating those attending to allow as many of their sixth form pupils as possible to come along.

Lifeline to nature

The sixth formers who visit our garden weekly are preparing for life outside school. Coming to the garden involves meeting new people, learning new vocational skills and discovering where food comes from. The school itself has very limited outdoor space or

greenery, so these weekly sessions are a real lifeline for these pupils to enjoy nature and gardening.

Learning skills

The pupils joined us from September, harvesting the fruit and vegetables in the garden which they took back to school for their pupil-run café. Throughout the year the pupils sowed seeds, potted on seedlings, planted out, staked, watered and tended the plants in the garden. They learnt to use tools, such as trowels and secateurs which required fine motor skills, they also worked on gross motor skills using larger items such as wheelbarrows and brooms. Sustainability was included as a topic, as the pupils discovered how we harvest rainwater for watering the plants — an absolute favourite task. Each week at the end of the session, the group would take a tour of our nature trail. In Spring this included a quick pond dip to monitor the progress of our tadpoles, future slug defence for the garden!

Dedicated volunteers

Each two-hour workshop delivered to these pupils, took a team of three very dedicated volunteers at least three hours to prepare. Our gardening volunteers look after the garden and each week ensure there are enough tasks for each pupil, with the range of tasks varying to meet the needs and abilities of the group. This is not an easy task! During each workshop, our staff and volunteers worked one to one, supporting the students learning to garden.

Measure of success

Over the academic year we have watched the students grow immensely, the first week some were reluctant to get off the bus and many were scared to touch soil. Now as we draw close to the end of term, they can fill pots and plant seeds with no assistance, turn plants out of pots for planting out and safely use tools. The students who are verbal can also identify vegetables and herbs growing in the garden.



The gardening team at Holly Lodge who volunteer to help the children

LIVERY FOOD INITIATIVE CELEBRATED IN ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL SERVICE



In issue 63 of The Spade, Charity Chairman David Aitchison-Tait outlined our involvement in the Livery Food Initiative, created to help the City Harvest charity in their aim to reduce food poverty in London, writes Garry Coward-Williams.

City Harvest rescues food that is going to waste and redistributes it to 375 charities across London. They are currently providing 1.2 million meals a month to people living in

London that are in most need. On Sunday 1st October, I attended a Harvest Festival Service at St Paul's Cathedral, (the first in many years), in celebration of the work of City Harvest and the Livery Companies that support it, including our own. It was also an opportunity to launch City Harvest's new report which shows that producers and retailers pay over 100 million a year to throw away food that could feed the hungry. Clearly this is a charity very

much at the heart of our interests. The service at St Paul's was deeply moving and it was nice to have met Liverymen from other companies that have also been involved in the project. After the service we all gathered outside the cathedral where the current Dean of St Paul's, Deacon Andrew Tremlett, blessed the Livery-sponsored vehicle. If you want to know more or how you can help as an individual visit: cityharvest.org



Dean of St Paul's, Deacon Andrew Tremlett blesses the Livery Food Initiative van outside the Cathedral

NATURE RESERVE GETS FIVE NEW SIGNS

Charity Chairman David Aitchison-Tait recently visited the Garthorne Road Nature Reserve in South London to see five wildlife identity signs that the Charity provided funding for (The Gardener's Logo is proudly displayed on these signs). This was at the invitation of Ian Stone who is a member of The Worshipful Company of Curriers and a historian of The City of London at King's College. They are extremely grateful for our funding and the signs are being made good use of by visitors and school groups.



From the left: Ian Stone, David Aitchison-Tait and the Reserve's treasurer

MARKING EARTH DAY WITH 270 SCHOOL STUDENTS LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Fifty-three years on from the first Earth Day, representatives from Schools Outreach and Pollinating London Together (PLT) joined students from Haberdashers Academies Trust South in April for a morning of inspirational speakers, lively workshops and calls to action, held at Goldsmiths University of London.

Dominique Palmer, Climate Justice Activist, launched straight in, addressing the students directly: You are the future. She stressed, as did all the speakers and workshop leaders, that ...you are not alone., everyone can do something to help protect the environment, ..find what's important to you and pursue it. Her talk generated dozens of questions and fired a spirit of interest that set the tone for the day.

The buzz in the lecture theatre continued in the workshops. Dr Konstantinos Tsiolis, Researcher with PLT, delivered a workshop with

a series of challenges to identify different pollinators, their various needs and their fundamental importance to our food and the natural environment.

Dr Tom Young, our Nuffield Scholar and Green Blue Infrastructure Associate and Ecohydrologist at the Environment Partnership, delivered a workshop on green roofs and how to design them.

Other workshops looked at sustainable food; guerrilla gardening; the work of Greenpeace; and Re-Earth initiatives, with the result that the students were exposed to a very wide range of environmental concerns and initiatives.

Returning to the lecture theatre, Tom Young delivered the final session, on sustainable building design. Like Dominique, his talk was illustrated with many interesting

and informative images: amazing buildings with green walls or roofs; water management systems; people and animal-friendly design, using sustainable materials and carefully-chosen colours for heat mitigation.

Tom finished on a manageable note, a green roof for a neighbour's very grand rabbit hutch, emphasising the fact that projects don't have to be large to make a difference – every little helps.

Finally, a representative from each workshop summarised what they had learned and things they, and their schools, could do. These included: cooking more; eating fewer takeaways; reducing food waste in school kitchens; finding a roof among school buildings and planting it up; providing food and shelter for pollinators; cutting down on plastics and littering; re-using and recycling and making seed bombs to throw.



Enthusiasm and excitement during Konstantinos Tsiolis's breakout session. Photograph Andrew Clements.

LIVERYMAN JEFFREY BERNHARD

OBE 1923-2023

Sadly, the time has come to say farewell to a father, grandfather, and a mover and shaker in the Horticultural industry. Liveryman Jeffrey Bernhard died on 24th August 2023, following progressive health deterioration due to old age.

Jeffrey lived a full life and was thinking and planning to the very end. Having achieved one final milestone in his remarkable time with us, his 100th birthday on 7th August, he passed away quietly in his sleep and is resting peacefully at last.

Jeffrey leaves behind an extraordinary legacy in the wider Horticultural industry. He was a founding member of BALL and many other well-known industry bodies including HTA, GCA, IGCA, BGL and ELCA have been significantly influenced by his energetic contributions, his vision and determination.

Other organisations have also benefited from his engagement, enthusiasm, and leadership. These include Round Table, Rotary, Masonic Lodge and the Worshipful Company of Gardeners. He was recognised for his significant influence in the Horticultural industry, being awarded an OBE by our late Queen Elizabeth II. Many other impressive awards have been heaped upon him. The world of horticulture owes Jeffrey a big thanks.

On a more personal note, Jeffrey was an iconic individual as a father, family man and a grandfather, and latterly, as a great grandfather. Coming from a very troubled childhood in war-torn Europe, he began his adult life completely alone. He had only memories and

aspirations to keep him going. He was utterly determined and focused on success throughout his life.

As he aged, success followed, and he was able to focus much more on his grandchildren. He was a terrific granddad, providing meticulously for their future benefits in creative ways. In recent years, Jeffrey has been devoted to building strong relationships with his wider family who are spread around the globe. He's been a role model in that regard for many of today's generation of family. We're fortunate to have had such a generous and kind man in our lives. There's a universal sense of appreciation of that love and we feel a huge loss throughout the whole family.

Landscaping was the first and formative part of his business interests. The Nursery operations

followed, becoming one of the top 10 such businesses in the UK. Later Sports Surfaces were added, constructing many famous all-weather pitches around the country. Private schools were significant clients; they included Rugby School who invested in one of the first set of all-weather pitches regionally.

Rugby Garden Centre was one of the first in the UK. Another of Jeffrey's creative ideas. It was the smallest of the enterprises but very well known in Rugby. The other larger enterprises were Bernhard Landscapes, Bernhard Nurseries and Bernhard Sports Surfaces.

Jeffrey is survived by two sons, Stephen and Mark and five grandchildren, Alex, James, Daniel, Johanna and Alistair.

SPM Stephen Bernhard

