

212 GARDENS TAKING PART IN THIS YEAR'S OPEN GARDEN SQUARES WEEKEND



LONDON PARKS & Gardens Trust are delighted to announce that **212 gardens in 27 of London's Boroughs** will be taking part in the annual and extremely popular Open Garden Squares Weekend, which is held throughout London every June. The 2012 weekend will take place immediately after the extended Diamond Jubilee Bank Holiday on Saturday and Sunday,

June 9 & 10, 2012 and for the first time, the event will be in association with the National Trust.

This year **23 new gardens** will be opening their gates for the first time – these range from several National Trust gardens to community gardens to schools, urban ecology centres, roof-gardens and allotments.

They will be offering a wide range of activities such as visits to an Observation Beehive in Greenwich to exhibitions of Art & Sculpture in Stoke Newington (Hackney), Lewisham and Holland Park (Kensington & Chelsea). Other gardens will be offering face painting and crafts in Lambeth, bug hotel making in Bromley and knitting in Lewisham!



***Acton Community Garden (W3/ Ealing) will open on Saturday from 11am - 4pm.** It is a small garden featuring a 'Capital Growth' community vegetable growing area, nature pond and example areas of meadow and woodland. Maintained by the Borough's Rangers with assistance from community groups and volunteers at set times.

Arlington Square (N1/ Islington) will be open on Saturday from 10am – 5pm and Sunday 2-5pm. The Victorian terraces that surround Arlington Square, in a quiet conservation area of Islington, were completed around 1850. But the large, open rectangle in the middle only became a garden square in the early 1950s, when it was laid out by Islington council. Before that, it had simply been an unkempt open space, used during WW2 for trench shelters and barrage balloon moorings. The square today has



large mature trees, shrubs, lawns, roses and other flowerbeds. A newly revitalised residents' association holds regular gardening sessions. Volunteers have recently dug in thousands of litres of compost and manure, 7,000 spring bulbs, 400 lavender plants and 80 rose bushes. They have planted two circular beds with 350 summer perennials and 250 lily bulbs, and helped renovate the square's benches. Over the weekend, there will be guided tours. (See Illustration on page 1)

Arnold Circus (E2/ Tower Hamlets) will be open both days from 10am-5pm. Arnold Circus is a unique garden and heritage asset at the heart of the 1890s Boundary Street Estate in East London. Originally designed to form the centrepiece of Britain's first publicly funded social housing scheme, it was an eye-catching focal point. It was intended to improve public health, promote exercise and be a 'stage' for the local community. Its form and tiered 'wedding cake'

arrangement became the spatial generator for the layout of the surrounding estate. In latter years, the garden fell into decline and was rescued thanks to concerted action by the local community, led by the Friends of Arnold Circus. In 2010, the gardens underwent a major regeneration, led by LDA Design, which sensitively balanced restoration, sustainability, improvements and design. This took place after months of careful research, followed by meticulous workmanship to restore the historic elements and add new ones. A vibrant new planting scheme was introduced, bringing colour and seasonal interest and improving biodiversity. The focal point of the gardens, the 'at risk' bandstand, was restored using handmade roofing tiles matching the original. Modifications were made to historic railings, incorporating new seating. A rainwater harvesting system was installed, with underground storage reducing mains usage, providing recycled water on tap for planting and improving sustainability and reducing maintenance costs.

***Bramford Community Garden (SW18/ Wandsworth). Open both days 2-5pm,** Bramford Community Garden is designed and managed as a model of sustainability. Run by Transition Town Wandsworth volunteers, it aims to provide wildlife benefit, incorporate productive elements and be beautiful; contributing to its setting within a public park and educating the community on environmental issues in gardening. The garden includes a wild flower meadow, fruit orchard; edible plants in raised beds and mixed amongst herbaceous borders, to demonstrate that a planting scheme can be productive as well as attractive.



Canons Park – Seven Acre Lake (HA8/ Harrow). Open 2-5pm on Sunday. This formed part of the Canons estate, owned by the 1st Duke of Chandos, and was created to provide a glorious, prominent view from the mansion towards the east. Today a circular, unpaved path surrounds the lake but the original landscaping is no longer in evidence, as are most of the other water features created for the estate. However, the lake is still rich in flora and fauna and provides a sanctuary for migrating birds and waterfowl.



***Charlton Manor Primary School (SE7/ Greenwich). Open both days from 10am – 5pm.** Hidden away behind the dinner centre is the Secret Garden. Just a few years ago it was derelict and overgrown. Today it's a secret haven that includes raised beds, a vegetable patch, fruit trees and vines, a greenhouse, pond, bird hide, chickens and our very own observation beehive. The garden is used all year round by all ages and there are gardening clubs at lunchtime and after school. This year Charlton Manor led a group of other schools in Greenwich, which resulted in

growing the most beautiful cut flowers, being awarded a Silver Gilt medal at the Chelsea Flower Show and meeting Her Majesty the Queen for the second year running. Tea, coffee and homemade honey cake made from their own honey will be on offer, and other activities during the weekend include pond-dipping, exploration of their observation beehive. For the first time, Open Garden Squares Weekend and Slow London have joined forces to encourage Londoners to step back from the hubbub to explore the pleasures of slowing down. This will take place at Charlton Manor at 2pm on the Sunday (see illustration on pg 2).

***Clissold Community Garden (N16/ Hackney). Open Saturday 10am–5pm + Sunday 1.30-5pm.**

The garden is the prime example of Peter Bedford's horticultural therapy programme. Hidden behind a row of Georgian terrace houses and bordering a very small wood, tenants and participants have used recycled materials and propagated plants over the years to create an established permaculture garden.

Frequented by resident artists, food growers, bird watchers and sun-lovers this garden is being opened to the public for the first time. During the weekend, all visitors will be given a tour with produce and products from the garden available for purchase. Refreshments and barbeque will be available to purchase (including a home-grown salad), prepared and cooked by our participants from the Peter Bedford catering team. There will also be a selling exhibition of Art and sculpture created by the Peter Bedford Art Group (see illustration on pg 4).



Dulwich Upper Wood (SE19/ Southwark). Open

Sunday 10am – 5pm. In 1981 the Dulwich Society, together with the Greater London Council and the London Borough of Southwark arranged for the Trust for Urban Ecology (then the Ecological Parks Trust) to manage the wood as a nature reserve. Spinney Gardens Housing Estate was built in 1986, with Bowley Lane linking it to Farquhar Road. This link road cut through the southern section of the wood, separating a small triangle of land from the rest of the wood. Since 1988 a number of improvements have been made to the site to enhance wildlife value, improve educational facilities and disabled access. This includes the Fungi and Fern Gardens developed in the basements and a Pond/Marsh area, made using the London clay under the site. A grant was obtained in 2003 to renovate the Terraces/Wild Area. A new Woodland Centre is soon to open to help with interpretation and management of the site. A new Woodland Food Garden has just been created. During the weekend, there will be walks around the nature reserve plus guided tours at 11am and 2pm.

***Grey Court School Community Allotment (TW10/ Richmond). Open Saturday 10am – 4.30pm & Sunday 2-4.30pm.**

In 2008, Ham United Group (HUG) worked a small organic community allotment at Ham House, which proved very productive and was a great success. Following that success - and the fantastic advice given by the Ham House gardeners – they decided to spread their wings and grow. Grey Court School very kindly gave HUG and the community a piece of disused land behind the

Almshouses and this is now the site of a new, larger allotment. After much hard work and careful planning, the accessible raised beds were finished. It has now become a meeting place on a Saturday morning for residents; their children and the odd dog come along too. They plant, harvest, discuss



growing techniques and most of all enjoy homemade goodies at the end of the session. A fun and relaxed way to 'grow your own' and someone are always on hand to pass on their knowledge. All crops grown are for the consumption of the volunteers. During the weekend, they will be selling homemade cake, plants and jam. There will also be an opportunity to plant something - hand trowels and gloves will be on hand! Their community chickens will be delighted to 'cluck and coo' for you!

Hogarth's House (W4/ Hounslow) Open 12-5pm

both days. The garden at Hogarth's House pre-dates the House itself, formerly being a 17th-century orchard enclosed from Chiswick Common Field by high walls, which are still in place today. The footprint of the orchard has always defined the shape of the garden, which was to house Hogarth's studio, now sadly lost. The garden has played host to seedsmen and flower growing in its time; but is most famous for the mulberry tree with which the Hogarths became so strongly associated. Still in good health despite Second World War bomb damage, the mulberry may indeed be older than the House, a last remnant of the orchard that once stood there. The garden will be open to visitors, and at 2.30pm on Saturday there will be a short talk by Val Bott based upon her research for the new displays at Hogarth's House and her study of 18th-century Chiswick nursery gardeners. There will also be two performances by LAMDA at the house on Sunday.

Leighton House (W14/ Kensington & Chelsea).

Open both days 10am – 5pm. The tranquil garden of the leading Victorian artist Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830-1896) is located on the edge of Holland Park. The garden was restored in 1997 with the generous support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, on the basis of a plan of the house and garden dating from 1896. This showed the formal beds immediately in front of the house, and a large expanse of lawn with herbaceous borders around the perimeter. A trellis covered part of the path running up the west side of the garden and the two mounds originally laid out were evidently planted with two substantial trees. On Sunday between 10am-1pm, contemporary artist Julian Wild will be hosting workshops enabling visitors to add to his work 'Making the Connection', which is constructed out of pipe sections.



Loughborough Estate (SW9/Lambeth). Open 12noon – 6pm. Two fine communal gardens situated between three 1970s council blocks stretching back from Loughborough Road. The gardens and the blocks are in the continental architectural tradition with formal plantings including cypress trees. There are a number of Gaudiesque mosaics, which were erected in the 1980s by Freeform Arts. During the weekend, there will be tea and cakes, plus local community stalls as well as face painting and craft demonstrations.

Osterley House Gardens (TW7/Hounslow). Open both days 11am – 6pm. This National Trust property is the last remaining country estate in London with farm, parkland and gardens. The recently restored 18th-century Pleasure Grounds including a Grade I Adam Garden House with lemon trees,

American Border, Long Walk (including new Diamond Jubilee wood) flower beds in the 'Picturesque' style and ornamental vegetable displays in the Tudor walled garden.

Phipps Bridge Community Garden (CR4/ Merton). Open Sunday 10am – 5pm. A thriving community allotment garden on land owned by the National Trust, rescued from dereliction in 2008. Some 40 Sustainable Merton volunteers spent over 1,000 person-hours hacking down brambles, removing skiploads of rubbish and installing drainage. Two local schools worked on plots and their schools gardening project now extends to ten Mitcham primary schools gardening on their own sites. Part of the land is allocated as mini-plots to individuals who want to try out allotmenting; the rest is communally managed. Annual vegetable production totals 3/4 to 1 tonne. They will be offering teas and home-baked refreshments.

Queen Elizabeth Hall Roof Garden (SE1/ Lambeth) – open both days from 10am to 9.30pm. A hidden garden amid the concrete landscape of the South Bank. The Queen Elizabeth Hall Roof Garden has been designed and built in partnership with the Eden Project, Grounded EcoTherapy, Providence Row Housing Association, St Mungo's and NOAH. Explore the garden, meet the gardeners, take in the views across the city and enjoy a drink in the roof-top café. Southbank Centre's Festival of the World will be in full swing with many installations, performances and events taking place all over the site (see illustration on pg 3).

Rainham Hall (RM14/ Havering) – Open Saturday 2-5pm. This modest garden to the rear of the National Trust's Rainham Hall (1729) has been newly restored featuring a new terraced walk and orchard.

Red House (DA6/ Bexley). Open on Sunday 11am – 5pm. This simple garden and orchard surrounding the only house commissioned, created and lived in by William Morris, founder of the Arts and Crafts movement, Red House is a building of extraordinary architectural and social significance. When it was completed in 1860, it was described by Edward Burne-Jones as 'the beautifullest place on earth'. Tearoom and shop. House can be visited for an additional entry fee (National Trust members free) after 1.30pm. Guided tours of the house from 11am to 1.30pm by prior booking only.

St Paul's Churchyard Covent Garden (WC2E/ Westminster). Open on Sunday 9am – 5pm. The burial ground of St. Paul's Covent Garden dates from 1633, and was laid out to gardens in the 1850s. The award-winning garden provides a calm and tranquil space in what can be a stressful part of the city. There is ample seating for informal picnics and a brilliant setting for Inigo Jones's masterpiece, St. Paul's Church.

***The Secret Orchard (SE14/ Lewisham). Open Saturday 10am – 5pm.** The features of this garden include a soft fruit area, a newly planted urban orchard with heritage pear varieties, apples and cherries, and an espalier wall planted by the London Orchard project. There will be opportunities to visit their wildlife pond, greenhouse and potting shed and there will also be a free knitting workshop as well as trying pruning of the fruit trees (see illustration on pg 2)

Spitalfields City Farm (E1/ Tower Hamlets) Open Saturday & Sunday – 10am – 4.30pm. Spitalfields City Farm has given the opportunity to the community to create a community garden. They are in the process of building raised beds, which will form the shape of a spiral. The garden will contain a large variety of planting and there will be not only food to eat but also flowers, edible and non-edible. There will be a totem pole in the middle, which will represent the diversity of the area that the farm provides a service to and for. Over the weekend, the farm will be encouraging visitors to interact with their farm animals - sheep, donkeys, goats, pigs, chickens, ducks and geese; visit guinea-pig village and enjoy the other growing areas within the farm. You can also gain inspiration from the large polytunnels which are full of Bangladeshi vegetables (see illustration on pg 4).

Sydenham Garden (SE23/ Lewisham). Open Sunday 11am – 4pm. Sydenham Garden is an award-winning charity providing gardening, nature conservation and creative opportunities for the well being of local residents. They provide a place where local people, particularly those coping with ill health, can gain confidence and self-esteem through work and community. Referred clients, known as co-workers, work alongside regular volunteers and trained staff to help maintain the community garden and nature reserve. For those who prefer to develop their creative skills, they also offer a wide range of arts and crafts courses and activities. During the weekend, the garden will be offering refreshments (drinks, cakes), plant and art and craft sales as well as an art exhibition. (See Illustration on pg 1).

***Waterlow Park Kitchen Garden (N6/ Camden). Open both days 10am – 4pm.** In 1889, Sir Sydney Waterlow gave his gardens to the people of London as 'gardens for the gardenless'. In 2011, the original site of the kitchen garden was restored and re-opened as a community resource for growing vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers. There are 10 raised beds, each one managed by a different local organisation. These include two primary schools, two mental-health agencies, three local gardeners' groups, the Friends of Waterlow Park and HICAN, a local conservation group.

***Winsford Gardens (SE20/ Bromley). Open Saturday 11am – 4.30pm.** Historically the private gardens of Winsford House, the garden holds many original features, including ornamental shrub beds, fruit trees, rose gardens and stunning stretches of lawn. More recently, while open as a public park, the gardens were neglected. Last year, however, the environmental charity BTCV stepped in to recruit volunteers from the local area of Penge to form Penge Green Gym, a group who work to breathe life into the gardens, transforming the site into an exciting, attractive community space and wildlife garden. Since May 2011 work has been carried out through weekly sessions to increase colour and vibrancy in the gardens, create a sustainable food-growing space, herb garden and propagation area, develop a native wildflower meadow, increase wildlife habitats through constructing stag beetle loggeries, insect hotels and wood piles, and plant an urban orchard and hedgerows. During the weekend, there will be a variety of children's activities including making bird feeders and bug hotels, plus a treasure hunt. (see illustration on pg 4).

* = Capital Growth Garden

For more information, please visit www.opensquares.org
Tickets cost £9 if bought in advance and £12 during the weekend.

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Notes to Editors

- **The National Trust** is a charity with a love for preserving historic places and spaces across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In short, we're a conservation charity that protects over 350 historic houses, 160 gardens, 1,100 kilometres of coastline, 254,000 hectares of land of outstanding natural beauty, 6 World Heritage Sites, 28 castles and 60 pubs - and opens them for people like you to enjoy. Find out more at: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/>
- Open Garden Squares Weekend is run by the **London Parks & Gardens Trust** to raise awareness of the significant social, cultural, environmental and economic contribution that garden and squares make to the capital and its inhabitants. The Trust provides a centre for education, research, and creative projects for the improvement and conservation of London's green urban spaces. www.londongardenstrust.org
- Open Garden Squares Weekend will be participating in **The Chelsea Fringe** and will be the culmination of three exciting weeks of horticultural 'happenings', pop-up gardens and installations.



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