



South & South East in Bloom & London in Bloom

Growing Greener Communities

(Late) APRIL 2023



Is Bloom Relevant in Today's World

In its 50-year-plus existence, Bloom has achieved much. It facilitated increased tourism and helped create some of our region's most attractive villages, towns, and cities. Bloom has raised public awareness about critical environmental issues, provided opportunities for volunteers and volunteering, and of course, top of the bill, has championed gardening and horticulture through its close association with the Royal Horticultural Society and Britain in Bloom.

But is Bloom, in its current form, fit for purpose? So where do we go from here?

Do we continue with categories for Villages, Towns, & Cities defined and constrained by populations, boundaries and the availability of budgets and funding, or do we do something else?

We believe there is growing support for the something else scenario amongst our friends and colleagues across Britain in Bloom's sixteen regions and nations, of which we are three regions. So, here's a question for you....

Do we continue with the current structure and attempt to make it more relevant and available to a broader audience, or should we be bold and take a different tack?

This year we are introducing a range of new discretionary awards, which could quickly become category awards in their own right in the future. These are listed on the next page.

So, if you have a little time and are willing to discuss this with your team or group, please give us your view or perhaps a different view of how we can offer a better way to increase participation.

Please see the following page for these awards. As a trial this year, we offer them as discretionary awards to enable us to gauge if these could be of interest in the future.

Please respond to peter@londoninbloom.co.uk or peter@sseib.com

Many thanks, Ed:

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Discretionary Awards 2023

Core Entries & Parks

Biodiversity & Environmental Innovation Award

What efforts have been made to increase opportunities for plants and nature?

Best Community Engagement Award

How has the entry engaged with the broader community and encouraged their involvement, and engaged them in gardening

Best Horticultural Achievement & Sustainable Award

What has the entry achieved over and above the usual entry standards? What actions have been taken to create sustainable planting and care for the environment's scarce resources?

Best Business for Horticulture Award

Awarded to businesses who make a connection to and use horticulture to enhance their business premises or surroundings and add to their environmental credentials

It's Your Neighbourhood Entries

Best Horticultural Health & Wellbeing Award

Awarded to entries whose gardening and horticultural activities have improved the health & well-being of its volunteers and members

Best It's Your Neighbourhood Award for Environmental Responsibility

Awarded to the community(s) who best address environmental concerns in their community using gardening, conservation and increasing biodiversity

Best It's Your Neighbourhood Award for Gardening Achievement

Awarded to the community(s) whose gardening activities and range of plants grown are at a high standard and contribute to the wider community.

Best It's Your Neighbourhood Award for Community Participation

Awarded to the community(s) that best exemplifies the value of community gardening and benefits the wider community.

Overall Best It's Your Neighbourhood Award.

Awarded to the Its Your Neighbourhood Community achieves overall the highest standard that embodies all of the above and exemplifies the value and achievement of Community Gardening

Entries wishing to be recognised for any of the above awards this year must self-nominate and inform our campaign managers that they wish to participate. This should be no later than 1st June. We can only accept a maximum of two entries from the above list. We cannot accept entries on the day of judging.

Once we have received your request to be assessed for these awards, we will forward a copy of the criteria. No additional time will be allocated for these awards, and those wishing to participate will need to inform the judge or assessor at the time why they believe their entry should receive an award.

Rewilding News -- Kate Harris, Co-Campaign Manager

Following my article last month, I thought I should share some rewilding news from across our regions.

There is no doubt that Beavers affect their local environment. Some are less in favour of their continued reintroduction. However, from test projects, the impact of these lovable little fuzzy mammals has been extremely positive. The creation of their dams improves the local environment by creating wetlands, channels, increases water retention and slows down flood waters, helping to reduce downstream flooding. You may have seen that beavers are now living wild in some parts of the UK again after the success of these reintroduction projects. Now after a 400 year absence in London, Beavers are now back. In 2022 a pair of beavers were introduced to Forty Hall Farm in Enfield. They are currently living in a 60,000 square meter enclosure (roughly the size of Windsor Castle), with calls for them to be officially released into the waterways. But there is more beaver news in London, with plans to release a breeding pair into Paradise Park in Ealing later this year. This is being done with the help of the Rewilding London Fund.



There are 22 other exciting projects that are benefitting from Rewilding. London Fund's latest round of funding includes the Zoological Society of London to help build knowledge of Water Voles across London, which are in rapid decline. They are hoping to find out where they live and how to protect them help tackle the issues they are facing.

Bats will soon benefit from a restoration project to increase woodland along the railway between New Cross Gate and Brockley. A new wildlife corridor will be created between Perivale Wood and Horsenden Hill to help Harvest Mice migrate between these areas and help to increase their numbers.

One of our rarest bumblebees, the Shrill carder Bumblebee will benefit from a corridor being created in the Thamesmead area.

Other projects are taking place in Wimbledon Common and Barnes Common, with Beverly Brook being restored to a more natural, wandering waterline to help increase habitat for species above and below the water.

London is not the only place in our region that are currently in the process of creating and working on rewilding projects. In last month's rewilding article, I mentioned the exciting reintroduction of Bison in Kent.



Knepp Estate is a fantastic success story and an incredible example of the power of rewilding. A quick Google search will bring up countless articles about the work being done at this amazing site.

Maple Farm Rewilding Project on the Surrey/Sussex border is another fantastic example, with 30 acres being managed by young people. This former grazing land is being rewilded, with the vision of creating a haven for plants and wildlife and has a mixture of habitats.

The Weald to Waves Project is an amazing project aiming to create a 100 mile nature corridor across Sussex. The plan to connect fragmented landscape is a combined project between farmers, schools, wildlife charities, community groups councils and more. The project encompasses 10.000 hectares of continuous habitat from the High Weald to the coast. As part of the project, there are plans to restore grassland and heathland, reinstate ponds, wetlands, plant trees and restore orchards, widen hedgerows and much more. If you are in the area, you get in touch to see how you can join this amazing corridor project.

There are just some of the incredible projects, both large and small, and just goes to show what can be done when people are working towards the same goal of benefiting and restoring wild spaces across our 'Wild Isles'. If you participate in a rewilding project, please get in touch, we would love to hear about it and how people can get involved or even just to share good news and hopefully inspire others.

Jim Buttress VMH – Patron South & South East in Bloom & London in Bloom

Greennwich Park – Part II



On January 30th, 1433, the King's Council of England granted to Duke Humphrey and his Duchess, Eleanor a license to empark 200 acres of land, pasture, weed, heath and furze at East Greenwich.

Originally the land extended from the River Thames up to the slope of Blackheath. It was similar in appearance to the vast open expanses of land at Richmond or Bushey Park.

Henry VIII spent much time sporting in the park, taking part in jousts and tournaments. Deer roamed throughout the Park.

In 1660 Charles II commissioned Andre Le Notre who was Frances greatest garden designer and horticulturist and at the time employed by Louis XIV to prepare a garden scheme. It was very similar in style to the Grounds of the Palace of Versailles which Andre also created.

The original scale plan with his handwriting on it is still in existence in France.

Although he prepared the plans, he did not visit the Park.

The central feature of the plan was the Main Avenue which now has an eye catching focal point at each end. The spire of All Saints Church on the other side of Blackheath and the imposing figure of General Wolfe.

Prior to his capture Terry Waite was the Vicar of the Church.

The Park was divided into compartments separated by avenues of trees mainly Sweet and Horse Chestnuts.

The original design included a set of grass steps leading down to the Amphitheatre which were not implemented.

However they are included in the Greenwich Park Revealed Project which has been possible as a result of the largest Heritage Lottery Fund Grant ever received by the Royal Parks £4.5m to fund landscape restoration, visitor facilities and community engagement activity.

At this present time the Flower Garden Lake is being restored to provide much improved habitat for wildlife.

When the Boating Lake is filled in it will be by borehole and not tap water.

The Van Brugh Lodge near the Storeyard is being converted into a Café with new toilet facilities and the foundations are laid for a new classroom and community space.

The original avenues of trees were designed by Andre Mollet who was one of the sons of Claude Mollet, Gardener to the King of France. Apparently, it was from him that Andre le Notre learned the elements of gardening.

Next to the Rangers House is Macartney House from which General Wolfe left for Quebec in 1759.

The statue of the General stands by the Old Royal Observatory because it was from this slope that he planned his successful battle at Quebec.

During the Second World War he was removed from the plinth which bears the marks from damage caused by a V2 bomb.

Horticultural highlights include the Flower Garden, Herb and Rose Garden.

Cricket, tennis and rugby are played on the Rangers Field opposite the House.

The composition of the soil consist of sand, friable loams or gravel which overlie the bed of London clay. At one time springs would emerge and these were piped into conduits which provided water for the Queen's House and the Manor of Plesance. Only one conduit head remains of the 14 that once existed.

The Lake in the Flower Garden was hand made by Italian prisoners of war.

Until the Greenwich Park Revealed Project has been completed, the red and fallow deer in the deer enclosure have been taken to Richmond Park.

At the entrance to the Flower Garden is one of the original Sweet Chestnut trees planted in the seventeenth century.

Halfway down Lovers Walk you will find Queen Elizabeth's Oak. It is said that Elizabeth I took liquid refreshments regularly inside the hollow tree which measures almost 6ft across.

Later a door was added, and the tree was used as a prison for offenders against the park rules.

The ancient tree finally fell in 1991. The horizontal trunk is all that remains of the original, but a replacement oak planted by the late Duke of Edinburgh stands nearby.

During July and August the Friends of Greenwich Park organise concerts on the Bandstands. They will run on all Sundays from July 2nd to August 27th, finishing with Bank Holiday Monday August 28th. All free starting at 3pm and finishing at 5pm.

I hope I have whetted your appetite to visit the Park.

Keep safe, keep smiling and keep gardening.



Lady Tankerville - Kate Harris, Co-Campaign Manager



Plate 12. *Phaius tankervilleae* var. *bernaysii*. Drawn by W.H. Fitch for *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* ser. 3, 29: t. 6032 (1873).

and fascination in the world of plants. With the help of her head gardener and her large greenhouse at Walton House, they spent time experimenting and cultivating these new and exotic plants. In fact, Sir Joseph Banks even named an orchid after Lady Emma, after she was the first person to successfully get the orchid to flower on British soil. The *Phaius tankervilleae* originates from parts of Asia, through to islands in the Pacific Ocean and is known by many common names, such as the swamp orchid or nun's hood orchid and is quite beautiful.

As well as her passion for physically working with plants, Lady Emma also liked to both commission and collect botanical paintings, as well illustrate plants herself too. Those she illustrated herself often included scientific notes on the backs and margins about conditions for growth, classification and her observations.

During her life, Lady Emma amassed over 600 paintings, many of which are displayed at Kew Gardens after they were donated in the 1930's. Lady Emma passed away in her 80's in 1836 and left behind a legacy as an art patron, collector and botanist.

Emma Colebrooke was born in 1752 to an affluent family. When her parents died while she was young, Emma and her sister Mary went to live with her uncle George Colebrook, banker and Chairman of the East India Company and split their time growing up between his country estate in Surrey and his London home.

At 19 Emma married Charles Bennet, the fourth Earl of Tankerville and became Lady Tankerville. Whilst this was an arranged marriage, it is said that this soon became one of love and they went on to have 11 children and lived on a large estate in Walton on Thames.

Lady Emma lived in the era of plant hunters and explorers, with many rare and exotic plants making their way back to our shores and being a wealthy heiress, Lady Emma had access to many of these plants. Lady Emma also had many connections afforded to her by her standing in society including botanist Sir Joseph Banks, who famously accompanied Captain James Cook on his first voyage. Sir Joseph bought the London home Lady Emma had grown up in and was impressed with her skill and passion for plants.

As was the norm for the age, the pursuit of the arts, science and botany was seen of the dominion of men, however like many of the women I have written about in previous articles, Lady Emma liked to bend the rules of society and found a passion



Out & About

Here are a few images from our recent travels this month to see the fantastic places we have in the UK.



*Figure 3
Wood for
Trophies
collected
from
Somerset*



Figure 2 Visit to Stourhead after collecting timber



Figure 1 Stourhead Parkland



Figure 5 Laurel as a woodland meadow?



Figure 4 Fountain Court Tulips, Hampton Court

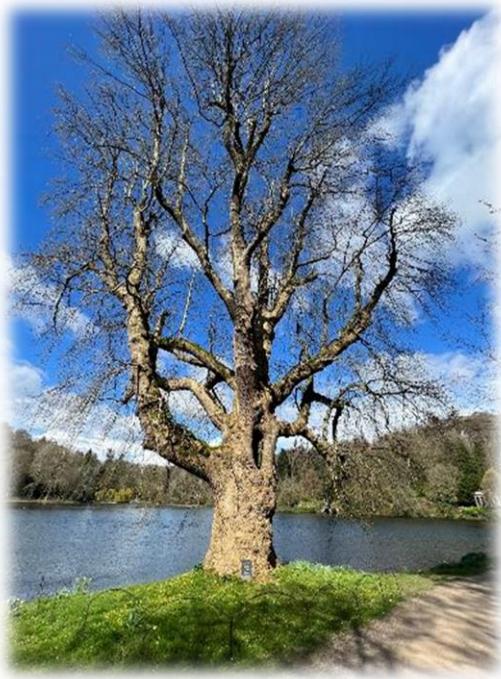


Figure 9 Champion Tulip Tree - Stourhead



Figure 7 Collection of Tulips, Hampton court



Figure 8 Sunken Garden
Hampton Court



Figure 6 Mixed Tulips, Hampton Court

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Amberol Supports S&SEIB & London

Our business's heart is a desire to make a visual difference. This includes stunning floral arrangements in calm, peaceful villages and fast-paced city environments and keeping Britain tidy through our wide range of bin products. We believe

that conversation and collaboration are essential to offer the best solutions for our customers. Collaborating closely with our customers, we offer tailored advice and free demonstrations to ensure they make the right decisions

John O'Connor Grounds Maintenance Contractor

John O'Connor Grounds Maintenance employs over five hundred staff and manages over 250 vehicles across the UK, providing complete landscape solutions to various sectors, including commercial and local authorities. The Company has always been mindful of its business's environmental impact.



London in Bloom Donors and Associates



London in Bloom is grateful for the continuing support of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, which has provided a grant to London in Bloom for 2022. MPGA is a long-established Charity that has played a vital role in preserving and improving countless gardens, neglected sites, and green open spaces across London. We provide modest grants to those who share with us a desire to improve the environment and, thus, the quality of life for the local community. Our work brings us into contact with various groups, including local councils, schools, hospitals, hospices, museums, voluntary organisations, and community groups.

The Worshipful Company of Gardeners, first mentioned in City Corporation records in 1345, is a survivor of the medieval craft guilds which exercised control over the practice of their crafts and ensured proper training through the system of apprenticeship. The Company is a "living" guild, and the numbers of its members are both professionals and amateurs actively involved in the craft. A common bond of horticulture and gardens unites all.



The Worshipful Company of
GARDENERS



The Royal Parks Guild is a voluntary Partner Organization of The Royal Parks responsible for managing and preserving over 5,000 acres of historic parkland across London. Our aim is a serious one – championing The Royal Parks by promoting their qualities, including horticultural excellence and historical significance, whilst offering practical support where appropriate. Allied to this is the service to its members through providing and developing a broad range of social activities and keeping members abreast of current and past news of The Royal Parks.

The Royal Parks has worked with London in Bloom since its inception in 1967.

Windowflowers is the original and still the largest independent, comprehensive supplier of Floral and Horticultural Services to the commercial sector in the UK.



We supply and maintain commercial premises and local authorities, mainly within London, surrounding areas, Southern England, and the Midlands.

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Windowflowers Limited, Grove Road, Burnham, Slough, SL1 8DT. 01628 667227 Email info@windowflowers.com for General Enquiries

If you would like to sponsor, donate or support either London or South & South East in Bloom, we would welcome your support – every penny helps us support our region and our participants and work toward a brighter, greener future