

OPEN GARDEN SQUARES WEEKEND JOINS FORCES WITH THE NATIONAL TRUST TO CELEBRATE LONDON'S GREEN SPACES



DATES have been announced for the annual and extremely popular Open Garden Squares Weekend, which is held throughout London every June. Organised by the London Parks and Gardens Trust, the weekend will take place immediately after the extended Diamond Jubilee Bank Holiday on Saturday and Sunday, June 9 & 10, 2012. For the first time, the event will be in association with the National Trust.

Around 200 communal gardens, many that are not usually open to the public, will be taking part ranging from the historic to the traditional through to roof gardens and allotments. Among the green spaces open especially for Open Garden Squares Weekend will be many of the much loved and popular gardens

such as **HMP Wormwood Scrubs; Eaton Square, Bonnington Square, Cable Street Community Gardens, The Regent's Park Allotment Garden, The Royal College of Physicians' Medicinal Garden, The Kensington Roof Gardens, Canons Park - George V Memorial Garden** – which will be celebrating its 75th Anniversary and the National Trust's **Carlyle's House** (See illustration on page 3).

Among the new gardens for 2012 and highly appropriate for the Diamond Jubilee year is the **Queen Elizabeth Hall Roof Garden** on the Southbank, which has been designed and built in partnership with the Eden Project, Grounded EcoTherapy from Providence Row Housing Association, St Mungos and NOAH (See



illustration right). The weekend – which takes place during the Southbank Centre's Festival of the World, which starts on June 1 - will allow the opportunity to explore the garden, meet the gardeners, take in the views across the city and enjoy a drink in the roof-top café.



Also new for 2012, **Arlington Square** (See illustration left) – a Victorian Square in Islington – that has a very active residents association who have recently dug in thousands of litres of compost and manure and planted lots of lavender and lily bulbs!; **Acton Community Garden (W3)** - a small garden featuring a vegetable-growing area, nature pond and example sections of meadow and woodland is opening its gates; the hidden garden at **Charlton Manor Primary School, Greenwich (SE7)** – that has raised beds, a

vegetable patch, greenhouses, chickens and an observation beehive and will be offering tea and honey cake over the weekend; **St Paul's Churchyard in Covent Garden** – has been a burial ground since 1633 and the gardens were laid out in 1850; the **Secret Orchard, Lewisham (SE14)** – has a soft fruit area, an urban orchard plus a fully licensed vegetarian and vegan café; while **Sydenham Garden (SE23)** (See illustration on previous page) is an award-winning charity providing garden, nature conservation and creative opportunities for local residents and **Waterlow Park Kitchen Garden** in Camden was restored in 2011 and has 10 raised beds each managed by a different local organisation. The land was given in 1889 by Sir Sydney Waterlow – who wanted 'gardens for the gardenless'. Also in South East London is **Winsford Gardens, Bromley (SE20)** – once a private garden, which has been recently transformed by members of the Penge Green Gym and still has many of the original features such as ornamental shrub beds, rose gardens and fruit trees as well as stunning lawns and a sustainable growing space.

This year, gardens in 25 London Boroughs will be taking part and many will be offering exclusive activities, guided tours and refreshments as well as selling plants, homemade jams and cakes. Examples include **Arundel & Elgin Garden (W11)** who will have live music as will **Belgrave Square (SW1)**, **Earls Court Square (SW5)** and **British Medical Association Council Garden (WC1H)**. **Culverley Green (SE6)** will have a fête and **Bowes Park Community Garden (N22)** will have a community picnic and children's activities. **Culpeper Community Garden (N1)** and **Cable Street Community Gardens (E1)** will also have children's activities and **Eaton Square** will have an exhibition of the work of sundial maker David Harber (See illustration right), who is celebrating his 20th anniversary (www.davidharber.co.uk) plus a steel band, Caribbean food and Punch & Judy.



Many of the gardens will have gardeners on hand to give advice and there will be an opportunity to meet the beekeeper at **Chiswick House Walled Gardens** and **Sutton Court**.

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. At 2pm on the Sunday, Slow London volunteers will be in selected gardens and squares for a session on slowing down and developing mindfulness – giving you the opportunity to explore your senses by listening, looking and smelling the world around you.

In addition there will be a variety of guided tours – both walking and cycling (details can be found on www.opensquares.org). For those who want to discover the gardens independently, two podcasts and self-guided bike rides can be downloaded from the website.



One ticket allows entry to all venues over the entire weekend. Tickets bought in advance cost just £9 and £12 during the weekend. Tickets go on sale in late Spring. For the first time, Special Group rates will be offered. Please visit www.opensquares.org for information on how and where to buy tickets.

For more information, please visit www.opensquares.org or follow us on Twitter @opensquares, There is also a blog 'Tales from Duck Island Cottage' which is updated on a monthly basis.

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
- The LPGT welcomes **help** during the weekend – please visit the website for more details. In return for volunteering, you will be given a free ticket to the weekend.
- Open Garden Squares Weekend will coincide with the last weekend of **The Chelsea Fringe**, which is a brand new Fringe festival for the whole of London and potentially the UK, to be held each year over three weeks in May and early June at the time of the Chelsea Flower Show.



For further media information and images please contact Rachel Aked at rachel@rachelaked.co.uk or +44 (0)7790 732448

January 2012