

Press release from London Open Gardens (The LPG Charity), May 2024

**From Fanny's green lungs to scandalous squares!
25 new tours of London will uncover hidden horticultural histories
for London Open Gardens Silver Jubilee, 8-9 June 2024**



London Open Gardens marks its silver jubilee with a very special set of 25 guided walks and cycle tours guaranteed to interest garden lovers, history buffs and the curious of all ages this 8 and 9 June 2024.

As well as sharing wonderful stories of city green spaces, the proceeds from this charity event, involving 40,000 visits to over 100 usually closed gardens, enable 'London Parks and Gardens' to protect historic green spaces throughout the year.

One ticket (£22 for adults) gives entry to 100+ secret London gardens ranging from rooftops to political retreats, ancient monasteries to allotments and bank and iconic squares over two days, with children going free. 25 fascinating walks and cycle tours with experts are available to ticketholders as an 'added extra' for a small fee but places are limited and likely to sell out fast!

Wonderful tours at a gentle pace suitable for all ages will uncover secrets ranging from the oldest city gardens; 'saints and sinners in Smithfield'; 'Pleasure, paradise and pocket parks', and the quirks of Bloomsbury. Expert guides will delight small groups with illuminating journeys of discovery along ancient streets, Thames side paths and through ruins, with some trails provided especially for families.

As the event celebrates 25 years since it was started by passionate volunteer Caroline Aldiss to open up city squares, current organisers London Parks and Gardens, LPG are also looking to the future. Walks will explore the changing west end and how the city is being re-planted for resilience amidst a climate emergency with valuable 'try this at home' lessons for every gardener to take away!

But history will always have a home in the much-loved London Open Gardens event. Tours like 'Southwark's hoppy past' 'London's 2000 years' and 'Belgravia; Squares, stucco and scandal' will illuminate incredible facts and sensational stories while treading some more familiar paths.

Following the recent erection of a Blue plaque to the pioneering plantswoman, LPG is delighted to share the story of Fanny Wilkinson's incredible local legacy with a tour of 'Fanny's green lungs for London'! Cyclists can see more at pace with three special tours for those who prefer to pedal!

London Open Gardens Chair Nathan Oley said:

"What better way to celebrate our gorgeous green city, its history and garden pioneers than to join a tour of discovery which will help to preserve our special, shared parks? London Open Gardens' silver jubilee is a celebration of London's green lungs and LPG's commitment to protect them, and everyone is welcome!"

[Full details:](#)

All walks and tours must be booked in advance.

Walks may accommodate all ages - family tours are designed for children.

Cycle tours are only for those aged 11 and above.

Guided walks (Fuller details [here](#))

Walks on 8 June

- 10am and 12pm: **London – 2000 years**
A unique journey 2000 years back in time to when London was founded
- 10am: **City of London: Replanting for Climate Resilience**
Join the City of London's Environmental Resilience team to learn how they will be supporting the adaptation of historic sites to face the challenges of climate change
- 10.30am: **Lincoln's Greens**
Through Lincoln's Inn gardens and into Lincoln's Inn Fields
- 10.30am: **Gardens of Belgravia**
Pass the townhouses of the rich and famous, and beautiful garden squares
- 10.30am: **From Pergolas to Pineapples**
A gentle tour to explore some of the City of London's hidden green gems and find out a little about their history
- 11am: **Saints and Sinners – the History of Smithfield**
Explore the rich history surrounding the Smithfield area, from the lows of Newgate prison to the highs of St Bartholomew's and Charterhouse
- 11am and 2.30pm: **Pleasure, Paradise and Pocket Parks**
A gentle stroll through the back streets of Lambeth delving into the history of the area and the characters that have helped to shape it
- 11.30am and 1.30pm: **Gardens in the Ruins**
A short walk around gardens created from the bombsites of the Second World War
- 1pm: **City Gardens Family Trail**
Look out for clues to important events in the story of the City; designed especially for families with children under 12 years old

- **2pm: Thameside Gardens 1: South Bank**
Visit London's 'wild side', traditionally the capital's industrial, entertainment and low-life centre, which rapidly changing character in the 20th century
- **2pm: On The Beat with Bloomsbury's Best**
A light-hearted meander through some of the best open spaces in Bloomsbury where – fifty years ago – your guide was a Bobby on the Beat
- **2.30pm: Belgravia: Squares, Stucco and Scandal**
Visit stunning squares and cobbled mews and learn about the people who lived, loved and died here, sometimes in dramatic circumstances!

Walks on 9 June

- **10am: Secrets of the City gardens**
Explore the City of London through its gardens, and the green spaces in and around the Barbican in particular
- **10.30am: Quirks and wonders of Bloomsbury**
The iconic gardens and architectural wonders of Bloomsbury
- **11am: Southwark, its gardens and 'hoppy' past** [L] [SEP]
Explore varied green spaces, retrace their sometimes-unusual pasts, and weave in Dickens, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Keats along the way
- **11.30am and 1.30pm: Gardens in the Ruins**
A short walk around gardens created from the bombsites of the Second World War
- **1pm: Inns and Out**
Visit Temple gardens, secret courtyards, a Shepherd and Sheep, and a church which inspired a wedding cake
- **1pm: Hammersmith Thameside Stroll**
Discover the history of the Thames at Hammersmith, through rural beginnings, 18th century well-to-do residents and 19th century industry, to the present day
- **2pm: Temple Gardens at their height**
A wander around the glorious gardens of Middle and Inner Temple
- **2pm: On the Beat in Kings Cross**
A light-hearted meander through the Dickensian back streets and alleyways south of Euston Road, where – fifty years ago – your guide was a Bobby on the Beat
- **2pm: Thameside Gardens 2: North Bank**
Explore the Thames as the main artery of pre-industrial London, on its North Bank lined by the palaces, houses and gardens of royalty and aristocracy
- **3pm: Old and New Biodiversity in the City of London**
A walk through some of the 200 open spaces in the Square Mile, looking at how new and old biodiversity interacts in City Gardens
- **Time TBC: Fanny Wilkinson's Green Lungs for London**
Celebrate the life and work of Fanny Wilkinson, the first professional female landscape gardener

Cycle tours (Ages 11 and over only – full details [here](#))

- Saturday 10am: **Cycle Tour of West End and City Gardens**
- Sunday 10am: **City and Southwark Gardens Cycle Tour**

- Sunday 10.15am: **‘From the grand to the local’ – a circular tour from Russell Square**

Tickets are now on sale at <https://londongardenstrust.org/>. Tickets for under 25s are half price and under 12’s go totally free! Full details and all terms available on the website. *ENDS*

Notes to editors:

- **Event photographs are free to use (with credit).** A selection can be downloaded from: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Eoiw7wdT2GKqpoPBm9GrNOTUGPqgUfc1?usp=sharing> (Please if you need something specific not shown please email us – as below).
- **115+ gardens in 12 London Boroughs** – across London Transport zones 1 and 2 have confirmed to event organisers, London Parks and Gardens, LPG, that they will open during one unique weekend, 8-9 June 2024 on one, or both days of the weekend.
- **Over 25-year-olds** pay £22 (+booking fee), under 25s just £11 and under 12s go free. Full details of ticket prices and terms are available at <https://londongardenstrust.org/>
- **For press and partnership opportunities please contact** office@londongardenstrust.org or nathan.oley@londongardenstrust.org

Event organiser, London Parks & Gardens (the trading name of London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust) is a registered charity (*no 1042337*) which protects our green capital, and a company limited by guarantee (*no 2935176*). We help everyone to appreciate and access historic green spaces from our home - the iconic Duck Island Cottage, St James’s Park, SW1. LPG is *affiliated to the Gardens Trust*.