

# FUTURE GARDENERS

grow your career!

## *The first year*

Louisa Mansfield *Project Manager*

Year ending March 2017



Worshipful  
Company  
of Gardeners

Open Spaces Bankside  
Trust 

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Promotional material to launch Future Gardeners.

*Cover photo*

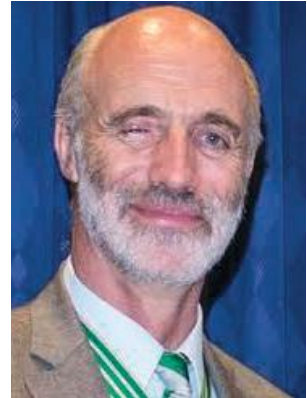
*First-year students from left: Steven Wren, Rob Finch, Christopher Hawkins, Paola MacGillivray, Edita Pociene, Sara Barnes, Luke Ferguson*

# Foreword

The Future Gardeners Project was set up to assist individuals in obtaining new skills that could prepare them for paid employment.

Our aim was to target those who, for whatever reason, had had fewer opportunities than others. Although there were several educational projects existing, these fell short of actually preparing individuals for work at the end of the educational process. The first year 'pilot' course was set up to educate participants in a wide range of horticultural practices and plant knowledge. This was followed by hands-on work experience with organisations that could develop the skills and work ethics of the individuals on the course. Throughout the course students were mentored and given support to develop so that they could gain confidence in the workplace and could address the challenges of obtaining employment.

*Paul Rochford, Past Master,  
The Worshipful Company of Gardeners*



Paul Rochford



The Future Gardeners scheme aims to provide horticultural training to people who have been long-term unemployed or faced challenges in their lives and who would benefit from gaining confidence, skills and the opportunity of training and employment.

## ***What is the Future Gardeners scheme?***

Developed by prominent organisations in the industry, including The Worshipful Company of Gardeners, Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST), The Royal Parks Guild, Walworth Garden Farm, Roots and Shoots and idverde, the course now works in partnership with numerous other organisations to ensure its success.

Participants are given the opportunity to gain the skills to be work ready and get an entry level job or go onto further training in the horticultural industry. Although the course is suited to a wide variety of people, it targets those with the most need, such as people not in education or training, the long term unemployed, those who cannot afford other horticultural courses on offer or people who have learning needs or disabilities.

- **The course is practically focused**, and includes the following: A City and Guilds qualification in Practical Horticultural Level 2 at Walworth Garden
- **Practical experience** in BOST community parks and gardens
- **Work experience** with leading landscaping provider idverde
- **Taster days and networking with outside organisations** in the horticultural sector: National Rose Society, Chiswick House, Regents Park and Chelsea Physic Garden
- **CV building**, presentation and interview techniques to ensure students are work ready
- **One to one mentoring** and support tailored to participants needs to build confidence

# The need for Future Gardeners

- **There is an alarming shortage of skilled professionals entering the horticultural industry in the UK**, in fact 72% of horticultural businesses say they struggle to find skilled workers, with 10% of vacancies taking a year to fill (Horticulture Matters, 2014). Although many people associate a career in horticulture only with gardening, opportunities in the sector are varied, and include arboriculture, working in nurseries and garden centres, maintaining sports facilities, landscaping, monitoring wildlife, and managing parks and heritage gardens. Horticulture contributes £9 billion to the UK economy every year so there are sound economic reasons to address this skills gap.
- **Unemployment can affect mental health, confidence and self-esteem as well as lead to debt and poor physical health.** A 2014 study by The Prince's Trust found 40% of jobless young people had faced symptoms of mental illness, including suicidal thoughts, feelings of self-loathing and panic attacks. At the same time there is a need for horticulture to be presented as an accessible (no barriers to entry), fulfilling career choice to many who may not have thought of it as being an option for them, especially those who have limited or no qualifications and who would prefer to have a career outdoors.

## *Impact of the first Future Gardener course*

Of the seven participants in this intake:

- Two went onto full time employment with idverde as grounds maintenance workers
- One secured part-time traineeships in the food growing industry, with both Organic Lea and Growing Communities
- One became self-employed with his first job to redesign a garden in Notting Hill
- One went on to further study with the Royal Horticultural Society and part-time garden maintenance
- The final 2 participants had other commitments after the course and are likely to come back to seek work in the sector at a later date

## Student feedback

There was good feedback from everyone who interacted with the scheme.

From the trainees 100% would recommend the course, 100% said it was excellent and below are some of their comments:

*'Gained confidence in my future as an enthusiastic horticulturist, knowledge and inspiration to pursue a dream and influence others into gardening.'*

*'Excellent combination of theoretical learning and practical gardening work.'*

*'I liked it all, knowledge given, experience in gardening, teachers...'*

*'I can begin to see a future for myself in the (horticultural) industry...'*

*'The team working together has been excellent, a mixed group who really worked well together.'*

*'The course was brilliant. The exposure to so many new things has been completely inspiring.'*

*'The speakers ... brought along were extremely valuable in gaining insight into the horticultural industry.'*

*'Great atmosphere among the group, top marks!'*

*'The course was a lot better than I dared assume, I've achieved more than I expected.'*

*'It (the course) truly has set me off on a new course in life. I feel as though a new branch has sprung from my head.'*



# *The pilot course*

The 12 week pilot course, was part-time 2 days per week, and was made up of a 6 weeks Silver course and a 6 weeks Gold course. The Silver Course took place from Oct – Dec 2016 and the Gold Course from 23rd Feb – 31 March 2017.

**Silver** – One day training towards a city and guild qualification and one day practical experience at one of the BOST gardens, along with talks and CV and interview preparation.

**Gold** – Carrying on with the studying and practical experience with more focus on job preparation.



Sara, Steve and Paola dividing snowdrops

**‘Excellent combination of theoretical learning and practical gardening work.’**

# ***City and Guilds Level 2 Diploma in Practical Horticulture***

The course at Walworth Garden covered the following:

- Plant nomenclature, terminology and identification
- Establishing propagation material
- Maintaining plants outdoors
- Monitoring and maintaining health and safety
- Maintaining and developing personal performance
- Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with others
- Preparing the ground for seeding and planting
- Establishing plants and seeds in soil
- Maintaining the appearance of decorative amenity areas
- Maintaining equipment and machines

**THE RESULT WAS A HUGE SUCCESS** as all the trainees successfully completed the **City and Guilds Diploma in Horticulture Level 2.**

**Bankside Open Spaces Trust's office in Red Cross Gardens added further courses and 'hands-on' education where students learned the theory and practice of:**

- Planting container grown plants
- Planting bulbs
- Composting
- Pruning roses, fruit trees and bushes
- Mulching
- Risk Assessment
- Hanging baskets
- Propagation by division
- Lawn maintenance
- Sowing seeds and pricking out seedlings
- Pruning
- Garden design

Bulb Planting at  
Red Cross Gardens



Marta and Paola  
planting cyclamen





Luke making  
a hanging basket

**'I can begin to  
see a future for  
myself in the  
(horticultural)  
industry...'**



# Speakers

Speakers from the trade volunteered to come and talk about their own careers and to give students the opportunity of finding out about many aspects of horticulture. The speakers were:

- Kerry Barehead, Head Gardener, The Rose Society
- Mike Fitt, Chairman, The Royal Parks Guild
- Paul Rochford, Master, The Worshipful Company of Gardeners
- Mary O'Connell, Parks Manager, Bankside Open Spaces Trust
- Helen John, Landscape Architect
- Lucy Attias, Parks Supervisor, St. James's Park, Royal Parks
- Alistair Bayford, Regional Operations Director, idverde
- Shaun O'Regan, 'Love London Working' Employment Advisor
- Alex Andell, Horticultural student at Pershore University
- Andrew Robinson, Community Development Manager, idverde
- Ben Edwards, Head Gardener at Neo Bankside
- Adolfo Harrison, Director, Adolfo Harrison Gardens

# *Employment mentoring*

There were meetings with Shaun O'Reilly an employment advisor from the 'Love London Working' partnership which covered how the organisation would help the trainees with employment prospects. All trainees had face-to-face meetings with Shaun outside the course times to cover individual topics such as CV writing, interview techniques and covering letters.

Richard Bennett from the temporaries division of Andersplus, a horticultural recruitment agency, spoke about the nature of the market and how to join the agency to look for seasonal contract work.

# ***Garden visits***

Visits were made to the Tate Modern Community Garden, Winchester Cathedral Garden, Crossbones Garden, Regents Park, The Royal National Rose Society, Chiswick House and the Chelsea Physic Garden.

This widened the student's knowledge of horticulture and gave them a chance to see what others are doing in the field.



Chelsea Physic Garden with Nick Bailey, Head Gardener



**'The team working together has been excellent, a mixed group who really worked well together.'**



Crossbones Garden visit

# *Work taster days*

These were one day visits to gardens for the trainees to get a feel for what it would be like to work within their own respective environments, this was followed by a short talk by the head gardener, a Q & A session and an opportunity to do some 'on the spot' work!

Here Louisa Mansfield, Future Gardeners Project Manager takes us through the visits.

## **The Royal National Rose Society**

Having already met with Kerry Barehead, Head Gardener, when she came to speak during the silver course, a sunny February morning saw us boarding the train to St. Albans on the way to the Royal National Rose Society. Here we were given a real insight on how to prune the 15,000 roses at the society's garden. The weather was glorious as we started with a trip round the garden then we were given advice on how to prune before getting to work ourselves under the supervision of the Rose Society staff. We were joined, at lunch, by Paul Rochford who was pleased to see everyone suitably hungry after our hard morning's work, then back to it for the afternoon. After a few more hours pruning, we stretched our backs to see the fruits of our labour and after promising to come and visit in the summer we were back on the train to London.

## **Chiswick House**

We met with Geraldine King, Head Gardener and after a quick risk assessment we were put straight to work helping clear the paths in the aftermath of storm Doris. We made swift work of our task and filled many trailer loads of branches after which we were rewarded with hot drinks. Then it was off to the world famous camellias where we were given a very informative talk by Geraldine as to their history. The Camellia Show was in a couple of weeks so we were busy looking for mealy bugs and wiping clean the leaves to ensure they were in tip top condition. Then at lunch we had time to talk to the two other gardeners who work with Geraldine and find out about their backgrounds. We then had a tour round the kitchen garden. Final job of the day was to help unload lots of camellias that would be on sale during the show to raise much needed funds for the garden.

## **Chiswick House (second visit)**

We were invited back to Chiswick House to help with the coppicing of some willow which was situated down by the lake. After an informative talk and demonstration of the use of saws and loppers by Geraldine we were set to work. We lopped and sawed all day in the sunshine and soon had a whole trailer load of willow which Paola was allowed to drive back to the yard! We had the chance to catch up with the other gardeners and to find out more about conservation at Chiswick House and there was even time for Marta, who missed the last visit, to have a look at the glorious camellias before we headed back to London.

Luke Ferguson  
pruning at The Royal  
National Rose Society



Sara and Chris  
(Chiswick House  
gardener) cleaning  
the camellias at  
Chiswick house





Edita and Paola  
cleaning up at  
Chiswick House



Marta and Chris  
(Chiswick House  
Gardener) coppicing  
at Chiswick House

## Work experience

All trainees had the opportunity to participate in two weeks work experience with idverde – a large landscape contracting firm who hold the contract with the council for all the green spaces in the borough of Southwark.

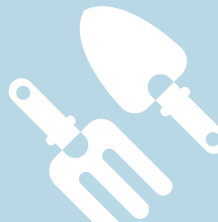
This key opportunity came through our relationship with both Alistair Bayford and Andrew Robinson who work for idverde and had been great supporters of Future Gardeners from their involvement from the start of the scheme.

*“Greg is a very knowledgeable, experienced and enthusiastic Head Gardener and he regularly prompted us to identify plants and trees in the park; he provided invaluable botanical information as well as notions of a more practical value in context. His team of friendly and experienced gardeners made us feel welcome from day one. On completion of our work experience, Greg gave us very positive feedback and informed us of a position for a temporary gardener becoming available in his team; he advised on the correct procedure to apply.”*

*Feedback from Paola FG on her work experience placement at Burgess Park*



**‘Excellent  
combination of  
theoretical learning  
and practical  
gardening work.’**



#### Work Experience

Edita and Paola, on their first day of work experience at Burgess Park with Andy from idverde and Greg (Head Gardener)

Opposite left to right –  
Andrew Robinson (Community Development Manager idverde)  
Gregory Smith (Burgess Park Head Gardener) Paola MacGillivray and Edita Pociene (Future Gardeners).

## Achievements of students



### December graduation

A graduation of the silver course was held on December 8th at 11am at The Glaziers Hall.

There were 30 invited guests including a mixture of Bankside Open Spaces Trust employees and trustees, local council representatives, partner organisations and The Worshipful Company of Gardeners. Walworth Gardens and Royal Parks.

Seven out of the eight trainees completed the course and all were presented with a City of London Guilds certificate by Paul Rochford and Louisa Mansfield.

A final graduation for all participants of the scheme was held on 5 April at the Royal Geographical Society, it formed part of an evening of

lectures on Multiple Partnerships in the Management of Green Spaces – an area of expertise in which London and the City of London have a vital role to play on the world stage.

Speakers included Lloyd Grossman CBE, the Chair of The Royal Parks, Jeff Barg, Associate Director of Planning at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Daniel Raven-Ellison, guerrilla geographer and Sven Stimac former project manager for the European Space Program EURECA.

The talk was well attended and there was time afterwards for the trainees to network with people from the industry.

During the course of the evening Paul Rochford – Master of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners presented the students with their Diplomas.



## Press coverage

# Blooming marvellous

Spring is in the air and Southwark is popping with a hybrid of colour, green fingers and great community spirit. The borough is home to some of London's fabulous gardens, green spaces and edible trails.

### Time and Talents



Time & Talents' beautiful gardens are a green oasis in the heart of our city. Where there were once docks and heavy industry, now Rotherhithe is one of the lungs of London. This edible garden has won Bermondsey in Bloom twice, and is lovingly tended by the Green Team who meet on Tuesdays and Fridays, bringing together people of all ages to get their hands dirty, build friendships and feel part of a thriving community.



Over the last few years, Time & Talents have transformed 1,200m<sup>2</sup> of communal areas on local estates. People eat what they have grown, from jam and chutneys and even the odd mojito every now and then.

To find out more or get involved, visit: [timeandtalents.org.uk](http://timeandtalents.org.uk)

12 | [southwark.gov.uk](http://southwark.gov.uk)

### Bankside Open Spaces Trust



Building, maintaining and protecting parks and gardens in the heart of SE1 is just what the

Bankside Open Spaces Trust does. All the sites are created and tended to by local people and there is a real sense of community collaboration, pride and ownership. Sites such as RHS Small Park of the Year 2016 – Red Cross Garden, Marlborough Sports Garden, Waterloo Green and Crossbones have been transformed thanks to dedicated locals who have been the driving force in deciding what happens in their green spaces.

### Get involved

Future Gardeners is an innovative training and work experience scheme, giving participants core skills to gain jobs in the horticultural industry. It's open to all who want to try out a career in gardening.

The Community Green Champions Project is looking for keen local residents to get involved in the care design and development of new and existing green spaces.

To find out more about BOST visit: [bost.org.uk](http://bost.org.uk), email [info@bost.org.uk](mailto:info@bost.org.uk) or call 020 7403 3393

## **FUTURE GARDENERS GET OFF TO A FLYING START**

The first group on the Gardeners' Company Future Gardeners project completed the Silver Course with flying colours in December of last year and were presented by the Master with certificates to mark their achievement at a special ceremony at Glaziers' Hall.

Eight people from a mixture of backgrounds finished the course which is intended to be both an introduction to horticulture and preparation for entering the workplace. They were required to attend for two days a week for six weeks.

One day a week was spent at Walworth Garden Farm in Southwark where they all successfully completed the Award Level of the City & Guilds horticulture qualification. The second day each week was spent working at Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST) with Future Gardeners organiser Louisa Mansfield.

They learned about planting container-grown plants, bulb planting, mulching, composting and rose pruning. They also had talks from various industry figures including speakers from The Royal Parks and The Royal National Rose Society. An employment advisor from Love London Working, a training and employment programme which helps young people find work, gave advice on CVs and job applications.

All the trainees are keen to progress to the Gold Course which begins in late February. They will continue their studies at Walworth Garden and expand on their practical work. They will also have training on subjects such as interview technique to prepare them for employment.

According to Louisa next steps also include updating CVs, doing volunteer work in an area they are interested in and getting experience in contract garden maintenance. "I am also organising work experience for them with different organisations such as Chiswick House, The Horniman Museum and The Royal National Rose Society", she said. "They have also been offered the opportunity to have mock interviews with the contractors for Regent's Park and also with the Royal Parks themselves which is a great opportunity for them".



All the trainees are keen to progress to the Gold Course where they will continue their studies and expand on their practical work.

The Company's partners in the Future Gardeners project are BOST, The Royal Parks Guild and City & Guilds. Roots and Shoots, another vocational training organisation in south London, have also contributed. Tim Wood, chairman of BOST said at the Glaziers' Hall ceremony: "Some of the Silver graduates have already got jobs. It's been an amazing start and a fantastic six weeks!".

The Master, Paul Rochford, added: "This is the first time the Gardeners' Company have got into the nitty-gritty of a training programme and I want to thank our partners BOST, the Royal Parks Guild, City & Guilds and Roots and Shoots for helping us put together such an excellent programme".

Twenty-year-old Luke Ferguson said after receiving his certificate: "I was keen to do something and I am definitely going to sign up for the Gold Course. This course has helped me by making me get up on time in the mornings, by giving me the chance to meet people and to learn how to focus on work. Not spending all my time on my phone but instead getting on with the job! I really would like to have a career in gardening."

The start of the Gold Course will be followed by a new Silver Course in May.

### The Spade

**'This course has helped me by making me get up on time in the mornings, by giving me the chance to meet people and to learn how to focus on work. Not spending all my time on my phone but instead getting on with the job! I really would like to have a career in gardening.'**

# ***Future impact***

After the success of our pilot year we want to develop and run the course for another four years. To do this we need to generate further funding of £25,000 per annum. Our targets and impact for these four years are as follows.

- **Running 3 Future Gardener courses** per year with 10 participants per course over a further four years enabling a further 120 people to benefit from the course
- **Enable 90** (assuming 75% success rate) former long term unemployed people into paid employment in the horticulture industry
- **120 students would gain skills necessary to access employment**, including interview skills and CV workshops using an independent career specialist
- **Mock employment interviews** will be held with *idverde*, to help students prepare themselves for a new career
- **One to one career mentoring** with exposure to different aspects of the horticulture industry
- **Work in partnership with organisations** in the field, at present more than 20 organisations are currently involved

# Partners



## The Worshipful Company of Gardeners

Founded in 1345, the Company was granted its Royal Charter in 1605. A key objective of the Company was to promote horticulture through education. In furtherance of this, members of the Company were permitted to 'bring up' apprentices in the 'Mystery of Gardening'. The Company continues its activities in many ways – the establishment of a library at Guildhall in 1891, scholarships to students, as well as awards to students from colleges of further education. The Company also part-funds apprentices and makes financial grants to outside organisations to promote horticulture.



## Bankside Open Spaces Trust

Founded in 2000, the aim of Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST) is to support, involve and inspire people in Southwark and Lambeth to create, enjoy and care for inspiring green places. Last year BOST worked with 573 volunteers to manage and develop 15 parks and 12 community gardens. BOST runs projects which: work with homeless people to assist in rehabilitating them back into mainstream society; work with vulnerable adults to reduce social isolation and build self-confidence; give children in cramped housing the chance to play and engage with nature; help communities on estates grow food; and create sports facilities used by schools and families to improve health and confidence.



## The Royal Parks Guild

The aim of The Royal Parks Guild is to support and promote London's Royal Parks in a manner that befits their status, unique heritage and cultural value through the input and support of Guild members, whilst developing and maintaining a range of social activities that benefit its membership. Its objectives include promoting 'The Guild' and the Parks' heritage and diversity, supporting horticultural excellence, supporting education and vocational training, supporting volunteering and outreach working and maintaining and enhancing links with The Royal Parks. The Guild's members have a desire to keep the parks at the forefront of horticultural, landscape and cultural excellence.

## Roots and Shoots

Roots and Shoots provides vocational training for young people from the inner city, mainly from the London boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark, in horticulture, retail, floristry and functional skills. We aim to give them the skills and self-confidence that will equip them for work. Every trainee who attends Roots and Shoots can expect a programme tailored to their individual learning needs and employment goals. The charity was set up in 1982 by Linda Phillips, who is still the Director, to help young people from Lambeth and Southwark prepare for the world of work. Up to twenty 16-19 year olds who have had difficulty coping in the traditional educational system spend a year learning with us. Alongside this training we involve local schools and the wider community by establishing our site as an important green space for urban biodiversity.



# WALWORTH GARDEN

## **Walworth Garden**

Walworth Garden is a unique charity dedicated to changing lives through horticulture. Located in the London borough of Southwark it was founded in 1987 when a group of local residents reclaimed a derelict street corner and created a community garden. Open to everyone, our award-winning gardens provide an oasis in the heart of Southwark. It's a place people come to relax, learn and grow. Through gardening education, training and therapy, we also provide opportunities and support for members of the local community, including vulnerable and disabled adults, those who've suffered traumatic experiences, and unemployed people looking to improve their professional skills and qualifications. Our twin aims are to enable public access, understanding and enjoyment of horticulture, and to help people develop the skills and confidence they need to find their way back to work, independence and wellbeing. In support of these goals, learning underpins everything we do. Whether people simply want to sit and enjoy their surroundings, take part in training programmes, or find out more about themselves through therapeutic activities, we give them the space, time and help they need.



# ***Can you help?***

The project requires funding for the remaining 4 years. If you would like to help us raise funds for this deserving initiative, make a donation or can help in any other way please contact **Louisa Mansfield** at [louisa@bost.org.uk](mailto:louisa@bost.org.uk) / [clerk@gardenerscompany.org.uk](mailto:clerk@gardenerscompany.org.uk) or call **020 7403 3393**

**'The course was brilliant. The exposure to so many new things has been completely inspiring.'**

