



# Welwyn Garden City Horticultural Society

[www.wgchortsoc.org.uk](http://www.wgchortsoc.org.uk)

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NEWSLETTER No. 160

Summer 2025

## Looking Ahead

Welcome to the start of a new season of talks – where did the summer go? Now we are looking forward to a stimulating series of lectures as the evenings draw in. We will be looking at clematis, hardy perennials, the history of female gardeners and, for the



December meeting, Manoj Malde, who you may be familiar with from the BBC's 'Your Garden Made Perfect'. We will round off the December meeting with a glass of wine and a mince pie.

As it is never too early to get some dates in the diary to look forward to next year, we have three outings planned for 2026, (details below). We trialled a 'pop-up' visit to the local Waterend House in July. If there is a demand, we can try to fit in short-notice events like this as the opportunity arises.

With such a packed programme we look forward to a good turn-out starting in September. We can always fit in a few more people so do pass the word around that anyone with an interest in gardening will be made very welcome at our meetings. *Alison Ewington, Chair*

## Membership Renewal

Subscriptions for the year 2025/26 will become due on 1 September 2025. Having had no increase for a number of years, this year the subscription will rise by a small amount to £20. If you would like to continue as a member, please email the attached form to Denise Madden [gladers2@gmail.com](mailto:gladers2@gmail.com). Payment by BACS is preferred, Account Name: Welwyn Garden City Horticultural Society, Account No 10733806, Sort Code 20-92-54. Please put your name as the Reference. Payment may also be made by cheque or cash. Please send to Denise Madden, 1 The Glade, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 7LG.

Membership cards will be available for collection at the September or October meetings.

If you do not wish to remain a member, we will be very sorry to lose you, but please would let Denise know on [gladers2@gmail.com](mailto:gladers2@gmail.com) and then she will not chase you!

If you have a family member or friend who would also like to join the Society, a form for new Members is also attached. *Denise Madden*

## Our 2025/6 Speaker Programme

Meetings are at St Francis of Assisi Church Hall, Church Road, AL8 6QJ. Doors open at 7.30pm with refreshments served before the talk which starts at 8pm.

### 9 September - Peter Skeggs-Gooch - A clematis for every season

Peter is the third generation owner of Thorncroft Clematis, a family nursery near Evesham, winners of 12 Chelsea Gold Medals. Over the years, he has acquired an intimate knowledge of the genus and will show what you can have in flower throughout the calendar year.



### **14 October - Annie Godfrey - Autumn fireworks**

Annie is a garden designer and the owner of Daisy Roots, a small independent nursery in Hertford specialising in hardy perennials and ornamental grasses. Her talk will focus on how to keep the garden colourful right up until winter frosts threaten.

### **11 November - Twigs Way - A history of women in the garden**

Twigs is a garden historian, author and lecturer on garden history and designed landscapes. Her talk about the female horticulturists through the centuries reveals how the fortunes of the female gardener have been as varied as their roles, from the early misfortunes of Eve to the successes of plant breeders.

### **9 December - Manoj Malde - My journey to Chelsea**

Manoj Malde is an award-winning garden designer, TV presenter, RHS ambassador and judge known for his vibrant style and bold use of colour.

A former creative director and fashion designer, he has been creating gardens for both since 2011. He made his debut at the Chelsea Flower Show in 2017 with his garden, Beneath a Mexican Sky, which won a silver-gilt medal.

### **10 February - Timothy Walker - Rockery in the garden**



Timothy is a welcome returning friend of the Society. He is a botanist, lecturer, author and a former director of the Oxford Botanic Garden.

The rock garden at the Botanic Garden has been rebuilt three times since 1926. His talk looks at the building of a rock garden, the plants that can be grown on it and includes examples of rock garden plants from all over the world.

### **10 March - Andrew Mikolajski - Permaculture for gardeners**

Andrew is a horticultural consultant, speaker and author of 40 gardening titles.

The term 'permaculture' was coined in the 1970s to describe a design system that creates sustainable gardens that mimic natural ecosystems. By working with nature rather than against it, you can reduce waste and your impact on the environment.

### **14 April - Paolo Arrigo, Franchi Seeds - Tips for spring sowing and perfect pesto**

Franchi is the oldest family run seed company in the world, established in 1783, specialising in rare and heirloom seeds. Paolo, another returning friend, is a seedsman, and an enthusiastic champion of slow food, endangered vegetables and biodiversity.

A keen grower, he believes we shouldn't overcomplicate gardening and is adept at advising which plants will thrive in the UK climate.



### **12 May - Anne Rowe - Lost houses and gardens around Welwyn Garden City**

Anne is a freelance landscape historian who has coordinated research for the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust since 1998 and lectures in landscape history.

She has written several books about medieval parks and the history of Hertfordshire landscapes.

*Laurence Bauer and Sue Friend*



## Our 2026 Outings

Tickets will be on sale at our meetings or you can book by sending the completed booking form, attached to this newsletter, to Anne Freimanis. Payment is by cheque or BACS.

### **23 April - Pashley Manor Tulip Festival. £53 including coach, gratuities and garden entry. Depart 9.30am College Way, WGC.**

Pashley Manor's spectacular Tulip Festival sees this garden, on the border of Sussex and Kent, carpeted with over 40,000 tulips, creating stunning scenes to enjoy. A hundred varieties of tulip are planted in colour themed garden 'rooms' throughout the grounds and in pot displays. Bloms



Bulbs marquee shows tulips as cut flowers and Bloms experts are on hand throughout the Festival to share their knowledge of these beautiful bulbs and to take orders from those inspired by the

spectacle. The café serves locally sourced and homemade cakes, scones and light lunches, which can be enjoyed on the terrace.



### **17 July - The Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds and Fullers Mill. £48 including coach, gratuities and garden entry. Depart 9.30am College Way, WGC.**

The award-winning 14-acre Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds is on the site of the former Benedictine Abbey. Created in 1837



approximately 20,000 plants are bedded out for the summer display. It is internationally renowned for its colourful and attractive displays and the heritage of its backdrop. Refreshments including light lunches are available in the gardens or a short walk away in the town.

Fullers Mill Garden is a tranquil seven-acre waterside and woodland plantsman's paradise. It combines a beautiful site of light dappled woodland with a collection of unusual shrubs,

perennials, lilies and marginal plants. The garden was created by the late Bernard Tickner MBE. He moved to Fullers Mill in 1958 and spent over 50 years creating the garden you see today from rough scrub and woodland. In 2013, the garden was gifted to Perennial, for its long-term preservation.



**16 September - Green Island Gardens and Langthorns Plantery. £48 including coach, gratuities, garden entry and group tour. Depart 9.30am College Way, WGC.**

Green Island Gardens is 20 acres of award-winning private gardens. Professionally designed by its owner Fiona Edmond, who will be leading one of our tours, it is laid out as a series of structured gardens displaying a huge range of unusual trees, shrubs, perennials, and bulbs. Holding two National Collections with Plant Heritage for Hamamelis and Camellias (Autumn and Winter Flowering), Green Island is designed to create year-round horticultural interest and delights for the senses. In 2024 it was the RHS Partner Garden of the Year overall winner and regional winner for East Anglia and the Midlands.



On our way back we are stopping at Langthorns Plantery to stock up ready for our autumn planting. It specialises in top quality ornamental plants, shrubs and trees, and boasts many uncommon and heritage species that are more difficult to obtain. The company motto 'We Live Plants; We Love Plants' reflects the dedication of Edward Cannon, a self-confessed plant addict, who took over the running of the Plantery in 2001.

*Anne Freimanis*

**Our 2025 Garden Holiday 30 June - 3 July.**

We had a wonderful time visiting Shugborough Estate, Dunham Massey, Arley Hall and Gardens and Biddulph Grange but the star of the show was our visit to RHS Bridgewater. What a variety of gardening styles to enjoy, whether the quirky design of Dunham Massey or the glorious canal side borders of Biddulph Grange, there was inspiration everywhere. For me the stand out gardens were, of course RHS Bridgewater and Ardley Hall. At Bridgewater it is staggering what the RHS has achieved in only four years, with the promise of so much to follow in coming years.

At Ardley we were in the knowledgeable and safe hands of the Head Gardener Gordon Baillie. Many of us had heard of the famous herbaceous border, but it exceeded expectations, looking fresh and full of colour even in this parched summer.

We all enjoyed the convivial company of fellow gardeners during our evening meals together and the stroll to the Frodsham Memorial afterwards to admire the panoramic views across the Mersey and round to Snowdonia. Most of all, our thanks go to Jenny Begg for making it all happen.



*Anne Freimanis*





There are many more photos for you to enjoy on our website

<https://wgchortsoc.co.uk> Photos: Steve Williams, Loekke Wigmore, Anne Freimanis



## Green roofs in London open to the public

Dusty Gedge has sent us a list of gardens members might like to visit:

**120 The Garden** is open six days a week from 10am until 9pm in the summer time and until 5pm in the winter. There is no need to book but you may need to queue.

**Museum of the Home** (Hoxton Overground) is open from 10am until 5pm but usually the gates are open earlier. The roof is on the way to the entrance. It is also viewable from the overground station. Here is a video about the roof that Dusty shot last year.

<https://youtu.be/TTHDOvAPUL4> and this shorter one <https://youtu.be/MMg0f0DRKB0>

**Nomura** (Cannon Street) is usually open to the public on Open Squares Weekend It is very popular with about 5000 visitors over the weekend. Here is a video about this roof - <https://youtu.be/v2qc-E2bsQk>.

**Eversheds-Sutherland** 1 Wood Street is also open during that weekend.

If you are thinking of building your own green roof, here is Dusty's link to the green roof DIY guide <https://greenrooftraining.com/>



## Christmas wreaths and table decorations

Sarah- Jane Nall-Cain from Waterend House makes wreaths and decorations from natural plants and materials. All proceeds go to charity. Orders are taken in early November. Contact: [sj@nallcain.com](mailto:sj@nallcain.com).

*Sue Friend*

## Growing the All Aboarders woodland garden

In 2024 the WGC Horticultural Society made a donation to create a woodland garden on Platforms 3 and 4 at WGC station. Over the autumn and winter the group prepared the bed by removing some old plants and improving the soil followed by planting. The weather has not been kind, with a very wet autumn and winter followed by a very dry spring and summer. There have been some plant failures but All Aboarders continue to plant the bed,



concentrating on drought tolerant shade loving plants.

This summer All Aboarders again entered for an RHS Britain in Bloom 'It's Your Neighbourhood' award, having won Gold in both 2023 and 2024. The judges have not visited yet, but fingers crossed. Also, our colourful stall at the WGC Celebration Day in the Howard Centre in July attracted donations and interest in becoming a volunteer.



All Aboarders is a small, welcoming and diverse group, with gardening volunteers working on the station every week on alternate Thursday and Saturday mornings. lovely comments and thanks from the travelling public adds to the enjoyment.

New volunteers and donations (plants or money!) are always very welcome. Please visit [www.allaboarders.org](http://www.allaboarders.org), where you can find information about the group and volunteering, as well as a QR code for online donations, or call Lynda Cowan on 01707 324723.

**If you have any news, seen plants in our public spaces or have plants in your garden that you would recommend please let the Editor know: Anne Freimanis, [a.freimanis@icloud.com](mailto:a.freimanis@icloud.com) or 07879 402783.**