

Courses... Colleges... Research... Competitions... Business ideas... and more

Welcome

The Zone is a peer-to-peer space, full of useful information for your career development. We want to hear about any initiatives you are involved with, whether you are still studying or already practising garden design. If you have an idea to share with other SGD members, or anything you think we should be covering, please email gdj@jppublishing.co.uk

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Five minutes with...

Jane Inge MSGD

Jane talks about her life since moving to live and work across the other side of the world

What do you wish you'd known when you started out?

That understanding business skills is as important as knowledge of design and construction skills.

Do you have a mentor or idol?

American landscape architect Thomas Woltz. The work he and his team did at Nick's Head Station in New Zealand is astounding – they have created a new landscape, totally at one with the location.

What has surprised you most?

That I am designing on the opposite side of the world – my earlier designs were in the Home Counties.

Your favourite style of architecture?

One that is at one with its landscape – in materials used and the due consideration for minimal impact on the earth.

What skill do you wish you had?

Fine furniture making. Wood is my favourite material.

What are the benefits of being in the SGD?

I have been involved since 1992/3. It is an invaluable resource: courses, workshops, conferences and

access to experienced designers.

The *Journal* continues to provide news, topics and insight into the direction landscape design is moving.

Which part of the design process do you like best?

Presenting the plan and watching the response. We can turn unloved uninspiring spaces into gardens that encourage, inspire and revitalise.

And which part least?

When a supplier says "It's on order and I think the container is coming via Singapore"... and you need it by the end of the week.

An issue you'd like to rant about?

I have lost track of how many clients show me huge plants outgrowing the space allocated, where they have assumed the size on the plant label is the ultimate size when planting. Probably more noticeable in New Zealand where plants grow at twice the speed but I wish garden centres/nurseries would provide more clarity, to avoid disappointment.

Jane Inge is an English landscape designer working in Wellington, New Zealand. She has been a registered member of the SGD since 2004.

Diary dates

19-21 AUGUST INTRODUCTION TO GARDEN WRITING

Residential workshop – part of the City Lit summer school programme. Fee: £222. Venue: Firocft Residential College, nr Birmingham. www.citylit.ac.uk

26 AUGUST SOCIAL AND THERAPEUTIC HORTICULTURE WORKSHOP

Organised by Thrive, Step 1 is a beginner's guide in how to use gardening as a therapeutic activity and meet your client's needs. An insight into social and therapeutic horticulture. Time: 10am-4pm. Fee: £80. Venue: Roots and Shoots, London SE11 6DN. www.thrive.org.uk

7 SEPTEMBER SEEING FLORAL – THE ART OF FLORILEGIA

Hands-on workshop on creating Florilegia and/or Herbaria with Rosemary Cambell and Sonya Patel Ellis. Techniques demonstrated will include selecting, recording, cutting, collecting, pressing and mounting specimens. Tea, coffee and lunch included. Time: 10am-4pm. Fee: £85. www.gardenmuseum.org.uk

16 SEPTEMBER SOFT LANDSCAPE WORKSHOP

Palmstead Nurseries Soft Landscape Workshop 2015. Venue: Ashford International Hotel, Ashford, Kent. Tel: 01233 81 1304 or nick@palmstead.co.uk

23 SEPTEMBER GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY MASTERCLASS

One day workshop with photographer Jason Ingram held at Bury Court with its Oudolf courtyard and Bradley-Hole front garden. Fee: £125. Venue: Bury Court, Farnham. To book go to www.gardenmuseum.org.uk

Urban project

CREATING AN URBAN OASIS

Christine Barve reveals what she learnt while creating a pop-up garden for the Jewellery Quarter Festival in Birmingham



THE JEWELLERY QUARTER is a unique and historic part of Birmingham city centre, full of tiny courtyards, roof spaces and balconies – some forgotten, many neglected and most ignored. With a little imagination these small, unloved spaces could be turned into secret gardens, providing the perfect spot to wind down after a long day or to make a slow al fresco start to the weekend. Many of the area's beautiful listed buildings are being renovated and repurposed to house a growing vibrant and artistic community and it's time to do the same with the outside spaces too.

During July, the Quarter celebrated the opening of Golden Square, a new public space, and I spent the Festival weekend in my pop-up garden, part of the Festival's Open Studio trail. I work from home in a city-centre apartment so opening my 'studio' to the public was not practical, but towards the end of May the idea of a pop-up garden was mooted. By early June, the Open Studios organiser had found me a courtyard tucked away behind the workshops of a jewellers and glass artist.

What had seemed like an entertaining idea was suddenly happening for real. I was (literally) on the map and had just six weeks to create something people would want to see and I would feel proud to show them. Right in the middle of the RHS show season, it provided a huge contrast to your typical show garden, which is months in the planning and supported by generous sponsors.

"AS INDIVIDUAL DESIGNERS AND AS A PROFESSION, WE SHOULD EMBRACE ALL OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE AND MAKE BEAUTIFUL OUR URBAN ENVIRONMENT"

My pop-up garden had a budget of practically zero and a short lead time so involved being very flexible on design and planting, dependant on what I could source for free or minimal cost. With little money to play with, the idea of recycling, up-cycling and reclaiming objects to create a garden seemed like the perfect solution – not only for this project but for the area as many residents are students or young professionals creating gardens on a budget or in rented accommodation. Another source of inspiration was the RHS Greening Grey Britain campaign – except that here our problem is not losing gardens, it's a lack of gardens to start with.

RECLAIMING THE OUTSIDE

The concept of 'The Room Outside' began to take shape. Using re-discovered and reclaimed objects, I wanted it to show how we can all make the most of these secret spaces and create our own personalised urban oasis, with old furniture, ladders, bath tubs and kitchen objects re-purposed and filled with living colour to contrast and complement the old brickwork and character of industrial workshops.

New to the profession, I'm still building up contacts and establishing business relationships, and so the hardest part of the project was making all those cold calls to potential sponsors. Some were unable to help because it was the middle of show season and, busy already, they were unsurprisingly reluctant to support an unknown designer taking part in the area's



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The 'Outside Room', constructed largely from reclaimed objects and plants; tones were chosen to complement the brickwork; this deep purple heuchera echoes the local slates and ironbricks

first-ever festival. But I learnt that it never hurts to ask and not to be shy. Many people were wonderfully generous with encouragement and contacts, even if they couldn't offer practical support. Did those calls pay off? Definitely – I was soon rummaging through a treasure trove of items in local reclamation yards and had been offered the loan of beautiful stainless steel sculptures by local artist Mike Bigland, also part of the Open Studio trail and just two doors away from my pop-up garden.

Would my first show garden pass muster with RHS judges? Probably not, because despite the short timescale I drifted off brief. My excuse is having to



work with what I could source cheaply and quickly, but I can see how easy it is to keep developing and adding new ideas that gradually and subversively seduce you away from your original concept. I would also be scored down for taking liberties with my planting combinations. Rescued by the generous sponsorship of a customer who allowed me to borrow the plants I was sourcing for her garden, I happily combined my shade and her sun-lovers for short-term aesthetic effect. In my defence and as the owner of a garden all in containers, one of the joys is that you can take liberties. Water-babies can sit by drought-lovers in their own perfect conditions and I often



“MY POP-UP GARDEN HAD A BUDGET OF PRACTICALLY ZERO AND A SHORT LEAD TIME”

move my sun-lovers around, kick-starting them in sunshine early in the season and moving them to a shadier spot where I want to enjoy them once in flower.

NO GRAND DESIGNS

Was it worth it? Absolutely, on a personal and a professional level. It was an enjoyable challenge and satisfying watching visitors' reactions and getting immediate feedback. Professionally, it provided lots of networking and marketing opportunities pre and post the event as well as on the weekend itself, and I have several new clients as a direct result. The total cost? Some lost sleep, occasional panics and just under £500, the majority of which is the value of those borrowed plants now settling in at their original destination.

One of the elements I really enjoyed was transforming a small unloved space into somewhere that could be enjoyed. Often gardening and gardens are seen as long-term projects and the focus is on large spaces and big-money projects. But the vast majority of us and our potential customers don't have the space, budget or length of tenure for those grand designs.

As individual designers and as a profession, we should embrace all opportunities to improve and make beautiful our urban environment, adding as much green to the grey as we can.

Just like my pop-up garden, many of us only have our city-centre homes on loan but that's no reason not to add colour and interest to enhance our time there, however temporary the stay might be – one weekend, one summer or one year.

www.barvegardendesign.co.uk

24-28 SEPTEMBER

WRITE ON KEW

Kew's first writing festival kicks off with gardeners Carol Klein and James Wong joining the literati, which includes AS Byatt, Bill Bryson and Louis de Bernières. www.kew.org

Plan ahead

10 OCTOBER

SYMPOSIUM: GARDENS OF THE FUTURE, AUSTRIA

As part of the award ceremony for the European Award for Ecological Gardening, there will be a symposium entitled Gardens of the Future: New Garden Spaces in Europe. Venue: Tulln, Lower Austria. More information about registration at www.naturimgarten.at/award-english or email office@standler.at

UNTIL 11 OCTOBER

ART, CITIES AND LANDSCAPE

The fifth edition of the Amiens garden festival features 23 gardens spread across the wetland 'hortillonnages' of the city of Amiens. Designers and artists from Belgium, France and Britain create garden and sculptural installations accessible on foot and by boat. www.maisondelaculture-amiens.com

14 OCTOBER

SOIL CONFERENCE: MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE LANDSCAPE

Organised by Tim O'Hare Associates, this CPD conference includes sessions on topsoil, SuDS and soil science. Venue: Howberry Park Conference Centre, Wallingford OX10 8BA. www.toha.co.uk or call 01491 822653.



ANSWER BACK! If you'd like to comment on any matter in the Professional Zone – email gdj@jppublishing.co.uk

History notes

ITALIAN GARDENS 4: VILLA LANTE

In the last of the series, the focus is on a garden that gives a whole new meaning to the term 'outdoor entertaining'

Words & photos: Stephen Harmer MA

I WROTE ABOUT the Sacro Bosco of Bomarzo in *GDJ* February 2015 and the period of the Renaissance known as Mannerism, which occurred in Italy around 1520-1580, and broke all the Renaissance rules. The garden of Villa Lante is one that falls into this category. Crucially, the architecture takes second place to the garden itself. Visitors look for the villa, seeking out the main property as the focal point. But this does not exist; instead there are two pavilions at the lower end of the garden, one on each side of the central axis. This reinforces the knowledge that Renaissance villas outside Rome had a major function as summerhouses, a place for rich families and Cardinals to escape the heat and smell of the city.

Villa Lante sits in a village called Bagnaia near Rome. It was most likely designed by the Italian architect Vignola for Cardinal Gambara, who had a passion for 'outdoor living' and would have had input into the design.

One of most extravagant outdoor dining tables to be found in any garden was created for him. The water flows down through the garden via the head, body and tail of a giant stone crayfish into a large basin with two large figures representing the rivers Tiber and Arno. Then it disappears underground before re-emerging into a large stone table designed to seat many for al fresco dining. Guests would sit around the table, cooled by the water around their feet in the lower channel, and select food from floating

containers in the centre channel, the food and wine kept cool by cold spring water.

The movement of water from the top of the garden to the bottom and its journey through various features took inspiration from Villa d'Este (see *GDJ* December 2014). Water in the garden can be followed through various routes. The journey starts from the Fountain of the Flood, designed to replicate the great deluge and the story of Noah. The water, run-off from the nearby San Valentino Hills, runs from the Fountain of the Flood down through the body of the crayfish. At Villa Lante, once the water had passed through the garden it went into the village to supply the local populace.

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

The garden is laid out in a series of squares and circles, clearly seen in the Quadrato and the Fountain of the Moors. This area is breathtaking – the four walkways that lead to the main fountain divide the water into four separate pools.

During the Renaissance the natural world was no longer the demon. The woods and forests weren't to be feared and gardens for the first time in centuries looked outwards and moved outwards into the countryside. This was a different mindset from the medieval period. Nature was not to be feared but controlled, and garden designers delighted in nature. House and garden were as one and linked together, as unity with the landscape was important. Villa Lante, like other



TOP Water falls from the tail of the crayfish into the pool, presided over by the gods representing the Tiber and Arno rivers

MIDDLE Water courses through the top of a stone dining table and a tabletop stream serves as a cooler for beverages in hotter months, while a stream beneath the table cooled tired feet

BOTTOM The Quadrato and Fountain of the Moors – a magnificent finale to the water's journey through the garden

Renaissance gardens, had a wild *bosco* (forest area) but, unlike other gardens, this was fully integrated into the overall design and not seen as a separate entity. This is due to Cardinal Gambara, who had an affinity with nature and wanted to demonstrate interplay between the two – the formal garden and the landscape. The grand tourists enjoying these wooded walks and delighted in the idea that a walk could be interspersed with architecture and statuary.

Villa Lante has passed through many different owners and seen changes and alterations. The Second World War had a particularly detrimental effect. There was even a period in the early 20th century when one of the pavilions was used as a garage. However, the garden has undergone restoration since 1953.

Villa Lante is open all year except Mondays and public holidays.
Stephen Harmer lectures at Hadlow College.
www.gardenhistoryexpert.co.uk

"GUESTS WOULD SIT AROUND THE TABLE, COOLED BY WATER AROUND THEIR FEET IN THE LOWER CHANNEL"

Exhibition

THE LOST GARDENS OF MANCHESTER



Art and horticulture combine in a Manchester gallery to bring the city's rich garden heritage to life

A NEW GARDEN installation has opened at the Grade I listed Manchester Art Gallery to celebrate the city's rich gardening heritage over the last four centuries.

As part of a new initiative between the National Trust and Manchester Galleries, 'The Lost Gardens of Manchester' has been created by a team of 30 volunteers, led by Sean Harkin, the National Trust's gardener in residence.

Sean says: "With the help of volunteers and local historians we delved into the past of Manchester's major former gardens and came up with various ideas for conjuring up their sensory elements within the gallery space. We took as inspiration the orchards of Shudehill from 1753 and the palatial glasshouses and grounds of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Old Trafford and the Belle Vue Zoological gardens that were both at their peak in the mid Victorian era. Set against the historic architecture of the Art Gallery building the aim is to create spaces for visitors to sit and enjoy. It will evolve over the course of the year and reflect the changes to the seasons."

Plants such as tree ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*) and phoenix palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) have been selected to give the true sense of what it would have felt

like in each of the gardens. The Trust has also commissioned hand-painted old signs similar to the ones people would have seen at Belle Vue and The Royal Botanical Gardens.

RELAX AND REFLECT

One of the volunteers, Peter Clark, a former police officer, says: "I have always had an interest in art and when the opportunity to volunteer on this project – to transform the front of the gallery with a garden came up – I leapt at it. We've worked well as a team – and I have enjoyed talking to visitors and passers-by."

To make the garden, the team brought in 10 tonnes of compost and 500 flowers and plants to include favourites such as foxgloves, peonies and grasses. The installation took 12 days to create.

Commenting on the installation, Maria Balshaw, Director of Manchester City Galleries, Whitworth Art Gallery and University of Manchester, said: "We are delighted to be partnering the National Trust – this exceptional installation will transform the stunning Grade I listed architecture of Manchester Art Gallery into a green and lush space, for reflection and relaxation."

The Trust started working with Manchester Art Gallery in December 2014. The partnership demonstrates some of the ideas that The National Trust will be exploring over the next decade as part of its new 10-year strategy, which is looking at new and different ways of working with partners beyond its boundaries.



Photos: Clement Neveu

TOP Ferns were popular in the Victorian era and give an authentic feel to the historic exhibition

BOTTOM Sean Harkin, gardener in residence, adds finishing touches to the exhibit

John Darlington, regional director for the North West, says: "This project presents a great opportunity for us to bring the gardening heritage of this great city alive. Our aim with our partnership work is to open up access to green space, nature and gardens to more of our city dwellers.

"We'll ask people to share memories of gardens in Manchester as part of the project. We would like the exhibition to help keep alive Manchester's gardening heritage and inspire the next generation."

The gardens exhibition will run at the gallery until 31 October. Manchester Art Gallery, Mosley Street, Manchester M2 3JL.

Open Monday-Sunday, 10am-5pm, including bank holiday Mondays.

Late opening Thursdays until 9pm.

Tel +44 (0)161 235 8888

www.manchestergalleries.org

"OUR AIM WITH OUR PARTNERSHIP WORK IS TO OPEN UP ACCESS TO GREEN SPACE, NATURE AND GARDENS TO MORE OF OUR CITY DWELLERS"