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Gates open on gardens for first time

By Susan Bennett

As Assistant County Organisers for the National Gardens Scheme, a charity raising money for caring causes by opening private gardens to the public, Earl Hyde and I are constantly looking for new gardens.

From May, East Finchley will reveal some of its fascinating hidden gardens, most for the first time, but with the welcome return of birdkeepers Paul Harrington's and Patsy Joseph's award-winning garden The Bungalow in Elm Gardens, now with their own fledgling son Stanley.

Newly-opening gardens

A conversation with Paul led Stephen Kersley to invite us to view his garden. Our first step up Stephen's path in Abbots Gardens told us instantly that our response would be "Yes". Stephen studied garden design at Capel Manor. Soft grasses, architectural perennials, texture, geometry, passion and understanding combine to create a space that lifts, yet calms the spirit.

A week later, three small cottage gardens beckoned, each unique and tempting. We discovered Janet's and her brother Jonathan Maitland's gardens in Trinity Road and Long Lane last year. A peek from Janet's study window revealed Jane Meir's promising plot next door.

Janet's organic garden shows experience, skill and a good eye, a thrilling space full of elegance and surprises. Jane is experimenting and transforming her space with exuberance, and a subtle sense of colour. John, a painter, started from scratch two years ago, creating an idiosyncratic year-round refuge. Visitors will be fascinated to discover what can be achieved in a small space.

In contrast, Tudor and Hilary Spencer's densely planted garden in Stanley Road has been thoughtfully designed to be completely wheelchair friendly with no aesthetic compromise. Eight distinct areas on two levels include a vegetable plot and pond.

Diary dates

If you can't wait until May, our own garden at St. Regis Close, Muswell Hill, chosen for the media launch of the 80th Birthday of the NGS last year, will be open on 29 April. It's Maureen Lipman's favourite garden, full of humour and trompe l'oeil effects, with

a temple, pagodas, wildlife ponds, and colourful planting. We sell plants that will thrive well in local conditions and Earl's cakes are legendary.

Even if you don't have a garden, why not enjoy a cup of tea and home made cake while you relax and admire your neighbours' hard work, knowing it's all in a good cause?

Garden open Sundays:

- 5 St Regis Close, Alexandra Pk Rd, N10; 29 April (2-7pm) and 4 May (2-6pm); admission £2.50, children free; home made teas and plant sale.
- 66 Abbots Gardens, N2; 11 May and 7 September (2-5.30pm); admission £2.50.
- East Finchley Cottage Gardens, 20 and 22 Trinity Rd and 399 Long Lane, N2; 18 May (2-6pm); admission £3 for all three, children free.
- 2 Stanley Road, N2; 18 May and 7 September (2-5.30pm); admission £2.00, children free; home made teas.
- The Bungalow, 15 Elm Gardens, N2; 20 July (2-6pm); admission £2.50, children free; home made teas; plant sale.



Tudor and Hilary Spencer's wheelchair-friendly garden in Stanley Road

Browsing for inspiration

By Diana Cormack

Ladies from *THE ARCHER* team indulged in an evening of browsing through the stock at Lazooli on the High Road. Everyone enjoyed trying on outfits and experimenting with styles they had never dared wear before, which resulted in some excitingly different purchases being made.

The footwear, bags, belts and scarves were well inspected and some unique jewellery gave inspiration for presents. Particularly eye catching were the lovely pieces hand made locally by Eti Wade of Fortis Green.

Gaynor Spry, who runs the business, told *THE ARCHER* that these evenings are becoming so popular that they are extending the idea. You can book for two hours any time, any evening, free of charge, with wine and ambience courtesy of Lazooli. The ideal number for browsing is between ten and 20 people and you can get an invitation to print out and give to your group. Friends, colleagues, book clubs, NCT groups, etc. can book their own exclusive Browsing Evening.

For further details contact Lazooli on 020 8883 1117 or visit www.lazooli.co.uk.



Debby Hiller, Sheila Armstrong, Diana Cormack, Daphne Chamberlain and Gaynor Spry at Lazooli. Photo by Ann Vautier

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