



Now I truly know why open gardens matter

Susan Bennett and her partner Earl Hyde have opened their Muswell Hill garden to the public three times a year for almost the last 30 years. This year, she experienced on a very personal level the benefits that the National Garden Scheme brings. The National Garden Scheme was founded in 1927 by individuals opening their gardens for a shilling a head, leading to the inauguration of the Queen's Nursing Institute. It now supports Marie Curie, Macmillan Cancer Support, Hospice UK, Carer's Trust, Parkinson's UK and many smaller garden and health charities.

Shortly before our first garden opening in April this year, my only brother Brian Rose was diagnosed with inoperable cancer. It was a huge shock. He was single, 78, and

organs. He was given weeks to live.

I was torn apart. From his bed Brian urged me: "Get on with the garden opening. More people will benefit than you



Happy memories: Susan, left, with Earl, her mother Bertie and her brother Brian

had been told his conditions were all treatable. Then he was called back to hospital urgently to learn that cancer cells had been found in all his major

sitting here with me." He was a Buddhist, totally at peace, but keen to be back in his own home. I had no idea where to turn.



Suburban oasis: A view of Susan and Earl's garden



Star guest: Susan Bennett and Earl Hyde welcome TV's Charlie Dimmock to one of their open garden days

That's when Macmillan Cancer Support took over. Handing over to his local hospice, Brian was supplied with a hospital bed, essential equipment, medication, GP supervision and district nurse visits, all for free.

At home, Brian was able to spend his final weeks, albeit bed-ridden, pain-free, enjoying visits from family, friends and neighbours. Now we both had peace of mind. I felt so much anxiety was lifted from my heart. The professionalism and care was priceless.

Brian died on 15 May, on his bed a red rose given to him by a carer and a photo of our mother Bertie Rose.

Last year Earl and I raised over £8,500 by opening our garden to visitors, including groups and coach parties from Austria and the US. Little did I know then that I was to become a beneficiary of the charities the NGS supports. The reality of what we do became tangible.

Next time you visit a National Garden Scheme garden, you can be sure the money you donate will be a blessing to an unknown recipient like me.

Susan and Earl's garden at 5 St Regis Close, Alexandra Park Road, N10 2DE is open on Sunday 4 August from 2pm to 6.30pm with home-made teas and a plant sale. Admission £5. Children free. Cash preferred. Or book online at ngs.org.uk. Private groups of 10 or more are also welcome at other times by appointment. Email Susan at suebearlh@yahoo.co.uk

Market to expand

The market at The Engine Rooms on Great North Road is set to get bigger. East Finchley-based social enterprise Dirthouse has been asked to host a monthly artisan market to run alongside the East Finchley Farmers' Market.

The Courtyard Market will run on the last Sunday of the month, starting on 29 September and will feature local makers and producers selling everything from art, textiles,

jewellery and ceramics to condiments and confectionery. There will also be live music and free childrens activities. For more details see Dirthouse.co.uk/courtyard-market

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