



A royal walkabout... garden to garden

By Gail Norcliffe

Prize-winning N2 gardeners had the honour of a royal visit on Tuesday 23 June when the Duke of Edinburgh explored three local gardens, meeting locals en route in a walk around the East Finchley Village area.

The afternoon visit included Caroline and David Broome's back garden in Church Lane, the Leopold Road Community Garden and the Hampstead Garden Suburb's Kids' Gardening Club.

As the London Gardens Society's Patron, the Duke knew about East Finchley successes in the All London Championships, as reported in The Archer in December 2025, and was keen to see them in person.

The royal visitor started at the Kids' Gardening Club where he planted a tree and chatted with younger gardeners. He then travelled over to the Broomes' back garden, a five-time All London winner in the championships, where he unsurprisingly asked for a private tour.

Caroline and David were delighted. "We couldn't have been prouder that the Duke of Edinburgh wanted to see our



Royal seat: The Duke with, from left, Councillor Alison Moore, Edwina Roberts and Kathy Batten in the Leopold Road Community Garden. Photo Mike Coles



Onlookers: The royal visit drew a crowd to the community garden. Photo Mike Coles

garden," said Caroline. "He was incredibly interested in what we have done and very knowledgeable about plants.

It was a relaxed occasion and he immediately put us at our ease. Having the Duke visit our home and garden felt somewhat unreal but it's a memory we'll treasure."

The Duke next walked up Church Lane, greeting groups of neighbours and stopping at Holy Trinity Church to say hello to vicar Marius Mirt. After admiring displays in Jennie Mann the florist, the Duke called at the Windsor Castle pub in The Walks, meeting landlords Eamonn England and Arina Piskunova, recent winners of the UK's best landlords title from the British Institute of Innkeeping.

Then a stroll further along The Walks led the royal visitor to his final stop, the Leopold Road Community Garden. There he was met by Kathy Batten and Edwina Roberts, leaders of the garden project, their team of diggers and supporter Councillor Alison Moore.



Garden talk: The Duke chats to Kathy Batten. Photo Mike Coles



The royal visit drew a crowd to the community garden. Photo Mike Coles

Dignitaries from Barnet Council and the world of gardening also enjoyed the special space looking glorious in sweltering June sunshine.

Locals and passers-by gathered round to watch as the Duke sat with Kathy, Edwina and Alison, eager to find out more about the garden and its place in the community.

Kathy and Edwina were thrilled about the visit. They told us: "The Duke was extremely complimentary about our neighbourhood garden, how it has helped bring people together in its development and maintenance, and the many ways it is used. It was fantastic that he wanted to see it and the afternoon was a wonderful success."

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