



Press release: for immediate release

OPEN GARDEN SQUARES WEEKEND 2017: Bookable tours and walks go on sale



l to r: Cleveland Sq, King Henry's Walk, The River Cafe, Nomura International

Open Garden Squares Weekend: Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 June 2017

Today (4 May 2017) sees the launch of a programme of exclusive activities with over 60 guided walks and several highly sought-after garden tours as part of this year's Open Garden Squares Weekend, when over 230 London gardens will open to the public over the weekend of the 17 and 18 June. Places are limited and book up fast.

A behind-the-scenes tour of the Kew Gardens Tropical Nursery, Highbury Stadium, the River Cafe's garden, and the roof terrace at Baring Asset Management are all part of this year's programme. Over [60 specialist walks](#) are on offer including those exploring the Lost Gardens of St James's, the Rich and Famous of Hampstead, Green Rooftops of London, People and Places: tales from the City and Bloomsbury: Quirks and Wonders.

Tickets are available on a first-come-first-served basis (except Kew which is by free ballot) - to find out more and secure a place visit opensquares.org. There is a £3 charge per head on top of the standard ticket price to reserve a place.

Click [here](#) for further information about this year's specialist tours and walks.

Open Garden Squares Weekend is London's biggest garden visiting weekend. Organised by the London Parks and Gardens Trust it is now in its' 20th year. This year visitors can explore some of London's most fascinating squares, gardens, and cultivated spaces including Nomura International's vast roof-top garden, the floating gardens of Garden Barge Square, the MaRoCoCo Garden at Rococo Chocolates, Eccleston Square, Eaton

Square and Belgrave Square, the Royal College of Physicians' medicinal garden, The Master's Garden within the Temple complex, the interactive green space and global food garden at Pooles Park and the Deanery - the Dean of Southwark's private, and historic garden. All private, but opening their gates to visitors during the Weekend.

2017 Specialist tours:

Behind-the-scenes at Kew - a super exclusive tour of the Tropical Nursery - the hidden gem of Kew Gardens. This is where Kew holds its reserve scientific collections and cultivates plants for use in displays within the Palm, Temperate, Waterlily, and Princess of Wales conservatories, including cacti, succulents and orchids. ***Ballot allocation**

Highbury Stadium - a guided stroll on the hallowed pitch of the former Arsenal football stadium to visit a modern minimalist garden in the centre.

River Cafe Garden - explore the growing of a variety of Italian salad leaves, vegetables and herbs and how they make it onto the daily changing menus with the restaurant's gardener Simon Hewitt.

Baring Asset Management - explore two magnificent roof terraces completed in 2010 by the landscape architect Charles Funke, with many plants chosen to reflect Barings' long history as a firm of merchants and merchant bankers. The northern terrace is inspired by Asia, and the southern terrace by Europe.

Other highlights this year include the return of the poets-in-residence programme **#MixedBorders**, in collaboration with The Poetry School, and supported by Arts Council England. Cyclists can join three different group rides - click [here](#) to find out more. Many participating gardens will host their own programme of events including pond-dipping, talks on aquaponics, bee-keeping, soap-making, seed-planting. All of these events and activities are free with the purchase of a weekend ticket - visit www.opensquares.org to purchase.

A full list of the 2017 gardens can be viewed [here](#).

Ed Ikin, Chair of the London Parks & Gardens Trust, organisers of the event, said: "Now in its 20th year, Open Garden Squares Weekend is much broader than the 'Open Garden Squares' title suggests and offers visitors unrivalled access to some of London's most unique green spaces. This year we have over 230 gardens taking part - a record number since the Weekend began in 1998. This vibrant annual event, organised by the London Parks and Gardens Trust, offers people a chance to visit, explore and learn about the capital's exciting and diverse cultivated spaces. There is no better opportunity to experience first-hand London's ability to grow in extraordinary places."

Website: www.opensquares.org

Twitter: @OpenSquares #OGSW17

Instagram: opensquaresweekend

Facebook: www.facebook.com/LondonOGSW/?fref=ts

Ticket information: one ticket gains access to all gardens (excluding those with special conditions for entry) for both Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 June. Advance tickets are priced £13 and available from www.opensquares.org. A ticket bought over the weekend

is priced £15. Family ticket (two adults and up to three children over 12) £40. Young person £10. Sunday-only tickets are priced £10. Children under 12 go free.

Listings Information: Open Garden Squares Weekend: Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 June 2017. Over 230 private, unusual and little-known gardens and green spaces open to the public for one weekend only. Organised by the London Parks and Gardens Trust to celebrate the capital's unique urban, green space network. Includes an exciting programme of tours, walks, talks and cycle rides. Number 10 Downing Street ballot closes 16 May. Kew tour ballot closes 7 June.

Weekend tickets: £13 in advance / £15 over the weekend. Under 12s go free

Visit www.opensquares.org to book and for more info. Follow on Twitter @OpenSquares

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Notes to Editors:

Open Garden Squares Weekend is run by the London Parks & Gardens Trust to raise awareness of the significant social, cultural, environmental and economic contribution that gardens and squares make to the capital and its inhabitants. The Trust provides a centre for education, research, and creative projects for the improvement and conservation of London's green urban spaces.

Sponsors and Partners

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- Green Man & Van @GreenManAndVan