

# The Garden Design Co Ltd

[www.gardendesignco.co.uk](http://www.gardendesignco.co.uk)

## 2015/2016 NEWSLETTER



### ANOTHER YEAR IN THE LIFE OF...

Never have we had quite such a manic year as 2015, faced as we were with the challenges of working in central London, the scale of working in a 26 acre estate and the long distance commute to Burnham Market on the north Norfolk Coast and west to the depths of the Cotswolds.

Our gardens are designed and built with pride, over months and years, such that many great friendships as well as great gardens are created along the way.

As such it was truly touching that so many supported me when I decided to open my garden up for the first time to raise money for [www.handsonforleo.com](http://www.handsonforleo.com) in aid of my great-nephew Leo who at four months was diagnosed with bladder cancer.



FOR MORE  
INFORMATION  
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## ACER GLADE; A UNIQUE CREATION

2014 saw us beginning months of sourcing and tagging 34 magnificent Japanese Maples for a project in Amersham. Each year Hilliers, with whom we work very closely to source the very best trees, use the same individual Japanese Maples to form the backbone of their award winning display at Chelsea Flower Show.

Hence these trees are never normally for sale, but we were offered the chance to buy them, so imagine the pressure in planting these unique specimens. So special was the undertaking that a video of the work can be seen at...

[www.treeandgardengiftcompany.co.uk/helpful-hints/acer-video](http://www.treeandgardengiftcompany.co.uk/helpful-hints/acer-video)

Despite bitterly cold northeasterlies for several weeks in March and April and a very dry first six months, we only lost one tree; but the rest more than made up for this casualty, with a firework of flaming foliage from September right through into November.

### This page and opposite:

1. *Acer palmatum* 'Osakazuki' 2. *Acer p.* 'Kogane Nishiki' 3. *A.p.* 'Arakawa', *A.p.* 'Waka momiji', *A.p.* 'Osakazuki' 4. *Maytenus borea* 5. *Acer palmatum* 'Waka momiji' 6. *Acer japonicum* 'Aconitifolium'



The resulting legacy will be with future generations for years to come. Indeed it was fitting that we were able to share the garden with more than 300 people who came to the garden's first ever open day in June, under the National Garden Day Scheme, raising over £2000 for charity. And for those who could not see the garden in the flesh a video of a year in the life of the garden can be seen at [www.gardendesignco.co.uk/a-year-in-the-life-of](http://www.gardendesignco.co.uk/a-year-in-the-life-of)

# GETTING LOST IN 26 ACRES

Being invited to work in the grounds of a 16th century manor house, which had been a family home since the 1940's, was quite a responsibility.

True there was plenty of room for our vans and delivery lorries but being sited next to a working gravel quarry gave us a clue to the underlying soil. Much was poor free-draining gravel and even the specimen Yew tree had suffered from years of competition from the surrounding grass, which had been over fertilised whilst the all important feeder roots of the Yew had been scalped repeatedly by the ride-on tractor. Dealing with these problems required much problem solving such that a set of measures were put in place to breathe new life into the Yew, as illustrated below....



Meanwhile the formal beds were completely reinvigorated following an ambitious planting scheme devised by Jo Alderson Phillips and the uninspiring entrance was transformed by a stone meadow (right).



**Opposite and below:** 1. Yew before treatment 2. Yew after treatment 3. *Ligustrum jonandrum* underplanted by *Lychnis* 4. Box balls and *Agapanthus* 5. Meadow six months after sowing



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However the clients faced the challenge of now maintaining these creations and head gardeners are nigh on impossible to recruit in Buckinghamshire where property prices are so over-inflated. Faced with this problem The Garden Design Company has now created an in-house maintenance department to ensure that we can offer a comprehensive quality driven maintenance service.

Headed up by Maintenance Manager Jonathan Davis, an increasing number of clients, new and old, who recognise that cheap day rates often lead to horticultural headaches are using us, so that they can sleep soundly in the knowledge that their gardens are in the very best of hands.



## LONDON CALLING

Living in the beautiful Goring Gap, the call of London is not strong, but we rose to the challenge of transforming this substantial garden in Holland Park. The garden had once been the pride and joy of the owners of the property, but having been rented out for several years, the mature trees and shrubs had a tired feel, compounded by the arrival of builders and scaffolding as the property underwent an ambitious 12 month restoration scheme.

It was however, a challenge to bring in by hand, 12 tons of an exactly specified graded loam, to create a lawn of bowling green quality, especially as it involved much climbing over and under the scaffolding. We were also to relay 100m<sup>2</sup> of York stone and repoint the boundary wall before the borders could be replanted. The result was the rebirth of a stunning oasis in central London. Green and restful, you could (almost) be in the Goring Gap.

## LOADS OF LOVE FOR LEO



5.

Gardens should be a place of great beauty and give much pleasure, so when an opportunity arose to share my garden and at the same time raise money for my great-nephew Leo (pictured on the front page), who at the age of four months had been diagnosed with bladder cancer, it seemed a good time. But I have to say I did wonder on many occasions what people would think of my garden, having lived here for some 12 years, with a garden design van in the drive. Nevertheless Saturday 12th September saw 350 people descend upon the first ever opening of my garden. And crucially Leo came too, having just got back from eight weeks of cutting edge proton treatment in the US.

With the countless hours of meticulous work that had been completed by my guys and girls, by Jenks the tree surgeons who have worked with me for so long, Peppard Building Supplies topping up my gravel drive (free of charge), jars of honey from another client and garden furniture and bunting from another, the day was such great fun. And to add to the day for the numerous families who came, friends brought a variety of animals to create a petting zoo including donkeys, a parrot, guinea pigs and a six foot corn snake.



6.

£1800 was raised on the day with another £1000 being donated before and after by people who could not come. Crucially Leo's all important scan, to see how effective his relentless treatment of chemo and radiotherapy followed by the proton treatment, has shown the treatment to have been a success. The affection and generosity of so many people has really touched Leo's family and Claire and I would like to thank everyone for their support. And with many people asking 'would you do it again?' the answer is 'yes' for the garden has now been approved to be open on Saturday 10th September 2016 as part of the National Garden Scheme with monies being raised going towards Macmillan Nurses and Helen and Douglas House.

**This page and opposite:** 1. Lilac and Camellias celebrate the arrival of spring 2. The garden when we started 3. Newly laid lawn 4. The completed London townhouse, 5. My garden in the beautiful Goring Gap (image donated by Ron Bridle) 6. My garden ready and open 7. Rob's man cave



**ngs** gardens open  
for charity

7.



The Tree and Garden Gift Company provides a unique and easy solution for choosing and planting trees, whether for yourself or a friend. Whether you are looking for the perfect christening or retirement present, a Christmas gift or an original wedding list option, these

gifts will last and last.

The Tree and Garden Gift Company will help you find a well considered and meaningful gift for a loved one. Advice is also available on the site to help with positioning, soil type and of course look, with a choice of trees up to 16 feet in height, the vast majority of which are UK grown.

All the inspiration, ideas and advice you will need to both buy and have planted, the perfect and lifelong tree of your choice are a few clicks away with [www.treeandgardengiftcompany.co.uk](http://www.treeandgardengiftcompany.co.uk)



## DOES YOUR GARDEN NEED A LITTLE TLC?

Having developed a team of superb guys and girls, which is expanding at all levels, we are delighted to be able to offer a more regular but still bespoke, and crucially, professional maintenance service.

Whether you need a one-off garden blitz, or a bucket full of TLC after your garden has been ravaged by the winter weather we are only a phone call away. Find out more at [www.gardendesignco.co.uk/garden-maintenance](http://www.gardendesignco.co.uk/garden-maintenance) or call me for a chat on **07973 261852**.

## OUR LOYAL TEAM

The Garden Design Company Ltd will be 20 years old on 1st May 2016, and Sally my book keeper has been with us for almost all that time. Ironically as GDC has grown so much in 2015, it's time for her to take a well earned rest so thanks for all her backroom work, advice and support.

To cope with our growth, Jill has joined us to take over from Sally whilst Karen is my recently appointed PA, who despite strenuous efforts has yet to convert me to Google Calendar. Rest assured the philosophy of just having one phone number, mine, remains, to ensure that help and support is only a call away. Meanwhile thanks go to the likes of Pete, George, James, Jim, Veronica, Martin, Andrew, Will, Jack, Des, Jonathan and newly appointed Tom, who have all worked so hard to create such outstanding gardens.

Rob

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[www.gardendesignco.co.uk/newsletter](http://www.gardendesignco.co.uk/newsletter)  
or call on 07973 261852