

## Newsletter Spring 2020

**Welcome to this spring edition of the newsletter.** We've taken the difficult decision to temporarily close the Gardens to visitors as government advises. Read our statement here:

<http://bit.ly/33CbtMK> We hope you stay safe and well and we look forward to the time, when we can welcome you back to the tranquillity of Martineau Gardens. People keep these Gardens going, there are so many who share their time, knowledge and support with us. With sadness we learned of the

passing of Joyce Rimmer, a much-loved supporter of Martineau Gardens: <http://bit.ly/3cKv15K> Thanks to the dedication of our wildlife volunteers, Brian and Andrew, we have an impressive list of moths identified—the total now stands at 400: <http://bit.ly/2UEQS7Z> Ray Bowers has stepped down from his role here at the Gardens as one of our Volunteer beekeepers. We hugely appreciate his enthusiasm and friendly disposition - read more here: <http://bit.ly/2ltjPfu>  
**Gill Milburn, Director**



*Bluebells in the woodland*



**Weathering the storm** We need your help more than ever. Please help us to carry on so that we can still be the hope in many people's lives. **Please donate here:**  
<https://localgiving.org/charity/martineau-gardens/>

## Making a difference—workshops for wellbeing



If you know Martineau Gardens then we're sure like us, you feel the intrinsically restorative qualities of our beautiful, natural environment. Our Therapeutic Horticulture programme has been running successfully for many years and we wanted to explore other ways the Gardens could help improve wellbeing. Supported by Bupa UK Foundation, we have been able to offer, without charge, creative courses to people who are 40-65 years and are experiencing self-identified problems with their mental health. The workshops run over five mornings each, and use the Gardens as inspiration. Mosaics (participants and artworks pictured above) and photography have run,

and planned for the future are creative writing, Tai chi and creative gardening. Our aim is that participants and through them, their friends and families will carry with them, in the words of one our volunteers 'the big green hug that is Martineau Gardens' and will continue to visit this restorative space for a long time to come. We look forward to the time when we can run the remaining courses—please check our website for updates.

**What is Martineau Gardens?** Our Therapeutic Community Garden is looked after by Volunteers, many of whom have mental health issues or learning disabilities. Hundreds of school children visit the Gardens to learn about science and the environment. Every year, Birmingham people (now in their thousands) visit the Gardens to enjoy its peace and tranquillity. We host events and courses and sell plants and produce.

## Changes ahead

**Due to the Covid-19 outbreak and during our temporary closure, most of the staff at Martineau Gardens are furloughed.** Nature carries on, of course, and the Gardens will be tended by remaining staff (following safety procedures). We are retaining an essential employee to monitor communications.

And so this may be our final issue for a while — but to stay positive, we did want to share our news stories and photos covering activities that happened before the pandemic.



*A honey bee working hard in the recent sunshine*

Credit: J Bradshaw

## Freedom to play

*The shipwreck play area in the past*



At time of writing, playparks across the country have been closed. Hard times for children. We all know you're never too young to benefit from time spent outside – the play area at Martineau Gardens has been a well-used, much loved area providing opportunity for children to engage their imagination and improve their wellbeing at the same time. Using the natural landscape and features of the Gardens in play, whether it's hide and seek, sandpit constructions, picnics or pirate fun - families can connect with nature and each other. Martineau Gardens is a safe and an inclusive space that offers play without cost, within an area of extreme economic disparity. School children on educational visits also play here during their lunch breaks. Due to an increase in footfall over the years, over the winter months, we plan to update and repair the Pirate Shipwreck area in keeping with our commitment to consider the environment and wildlife in all we do.

You can help us with our plans by filling out our survey on-line here: <http://bit.ly/2Q7MbQT>

Note if your local shop is Co op—since there are five stores supporting Martineau Gardens with this year's Local Community Fund. Read more:<http://bit.ly/2lAdEGO>

### Stop press!

The date for the Martineau Gardens' Garden Party is postponed— please check our webpages for announcements. This is a vital fundraising event for us.

### Cricket car park—ticket sales on-line

At time of writing, we don't know whether major sporting events will happen this summer. Each cricket season we usually run a 'cricket car park', as a fundraising activity. With Test Match Cricket (and more) happening on our doorstep, cricket fans pay a fee to park their car at Martineau Gardens. Each year we raise more than £3,000 at over 10 sessions. New for this year, we had developed an on-line parking ticket system, available here: <http://bit.ly/3cL6QUv>

Sales are postponed so please check our website nearer the time for the status on this.



Photocredit: B Perry

## Volunteering Matters



This is Aubrey, a volunteer on our Therapeutic Horticulture Programme. His story is one of incredible challenges, met and overcome with resilience and determination. In six months, he has become a valued team member and has made huge changes in his personal life. We are so proud of him.

You can read his story, on our website here:

<http://bit.ly/2VyhQi9>

## Autumnal plans and tree dressing



Paperbark maple, apple tree and crab apple — seasonal highlights to celebrate

Who knows what Autumn will have in store for us? Bees will still be making honey and trees will continue to grow. Honey Show fans should note that for logistical reasons this year's show will be held at Winterbourne In September. We wish the Show every success at this new venue. Later this year, if safe to do so - a new tree dressing event will be added to the events programme in December. Replacing the Autumn Event, it will celebrate all the trees at the Gardens, taking inspiration from tree dressing practices around the world. We plan to have many aspects of the Autumn Event - great food, music provided by local musicians, stalls and family activities. We hope so much to be welcoming back our supporters to this special event.

## Connect with us ...

How to contact us

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Opening Hours

Please read our latest statement on this here: <http://bit.ly/33CbtMK>