

RHS Bursaries provide funding for career changers



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ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Bursaries newsletter

Funding opportunities available to gain practical experience and improve horticultural knowledge



Horticulture is increasingly attracting people as a second career, for reasons ranging from a desire to build on a long held interest in gardening, to a dissatisfaction with an existing job or even resulting from redundancy.

RHS Bursaries can assist with funding to help provide essential practical experience and improve personal horticultural knowledge for such students, who are eager to progress quickly to embark on their new chosen career path. For many this means a drastic cut in salary whilst they are undergoing training, but for all who do so, this is considered to be very worthwhile.

One such student is Christopher Miller who has been working in gardening for three and a half years. Having read law and philosophy at university, he qualified as a barrister, but found the lure of his childhood passion for gardening much greater than his interest in litigation! He is currently working at Waddesdon Manor National Trust Gardens in the second year of a three-year traineeship organised by the Professional Gardeners Guild.



Christopher Miller 2007

In 2007 Christopher was successful in gaining an RHS bursary award from the *Blaxall Valentine Awards* to assist with the expense of an 18-day botanical tour to the Sikkim Himalaya, an area from which Sir Joseph Hooker had introduced many important rhododendron species. "Without the award" says Christopher "this horticulturally enlightening tour would have been beyond my means as a student gardener".

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Funding for career changers (contd).....

Also a late entrant into horticulture is Nancy Cannon, now a senior gardener at RHS Harlow Carr. Formerly a biomedical scientist, Nancy was in the process of completing her Master's degree, but even though things looked promising with regards to promotion, she felt more and more disillusioned with her career. Already having an allotment which she enjoyed, she decided to give in her notice and embark on a course at Myerscough College to study for a *National Diploma in Horticulture*, before then moving onto a trainee position with the RHS School of Horticulture. Nancy advises that "I have had a very steep learning curve and enjoyed every minute of it. My passion is still for fruit and vegetables and, when I heard about the RHS Bursaries, my brain went into overdrive. I have been provided with an opportunity to see at first hand what indigenous tribes in Ecuador grow and eat in the rainforest". This will undoubtedly fuel Nancy's enthusiasm for home grown produce and allow her to try these foods and techniques when she gets back home. Nancy considers that she might even discover the next "super food"!



Naomi Watt is another recent career changer: Having obtained a Biology degree in 1995, she then worked in a bank for 10 years, but decided to change careers as she was increasingly finding the banking world to be very stressful. Her love of plants provided her with a new direction and she has never looked back since then. She retrained at Askham Bryan College and then completed a student year at Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, Hampshire, being able to transfer her skills and personal attributes into horticulture. In May 2007 Naomi was awarded an RHS bursary to spend six months in New Zealand botanic gardens, working with native plants, attending short courses and lectures and having the opportunity to study different plant communities and plant ranges. She now works in a formal vegetable, fruit and cut flower garden on a private estate in Buckinghamshire and regards her time in New Zealand as "an incredibly steep learning curve and an amazing opportunity - who knows where I'll be in five years time!"



The above are examples of the ways in which bursaries can provide welcome opportunities for career changers to assist them with widening their horticultural experience and to take up opportunities they might otherwise not be able to do when funding is tight.



New Environmental Bursary

A new environmental bursary has been launched this year for projects of outstanding horticultural merit that concentrate on issues such as *water-wise gardening*, *research into drought resistant plants* and other *climate changes issues* relevant to gardening. Purely conservational projects will not be considered. Applications by professional and student gardeners will be welcomed, as well as from serious amateur gardeners, botanists and related professions, and should be made on the standard personal application form.



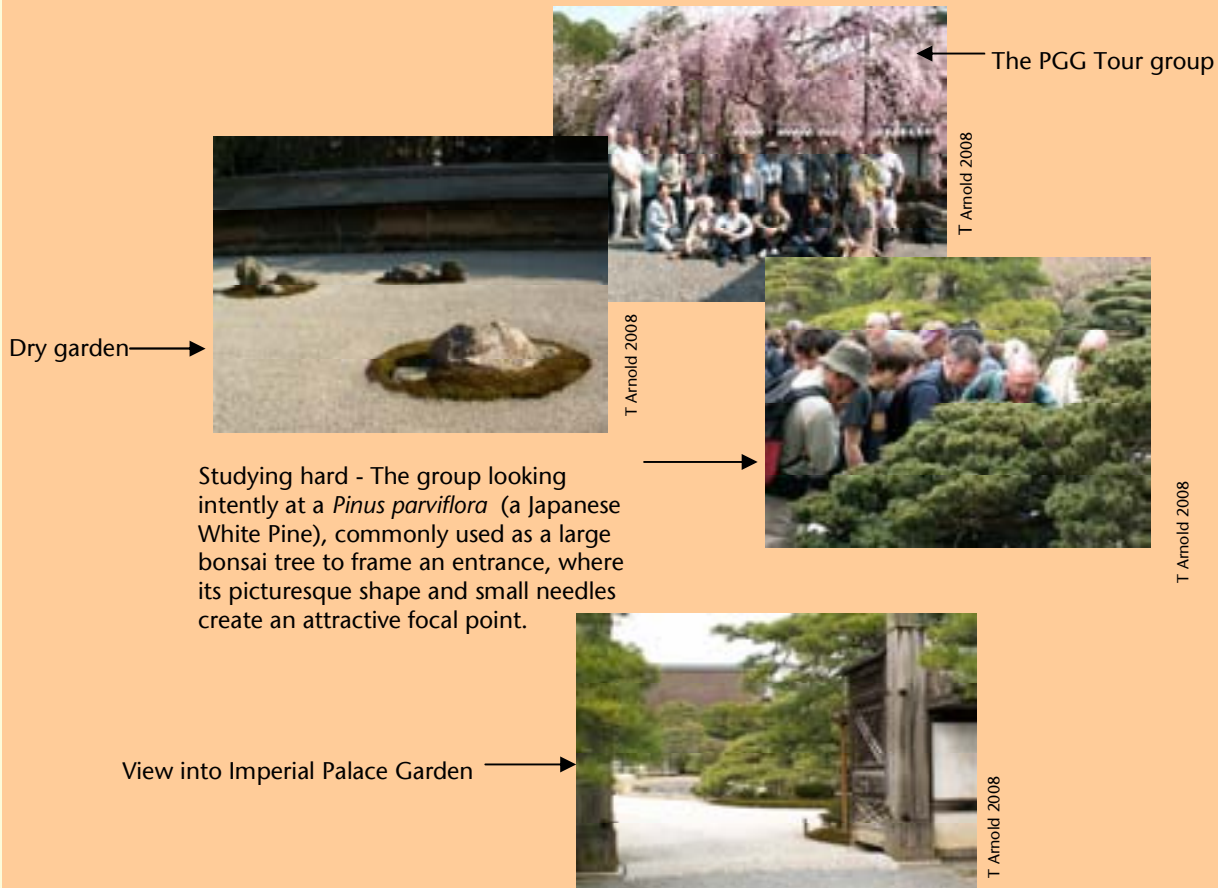
Future submission of bursary applications on-line



To reduce the amount of paperwork relating to all bursary submissions, the bursary application form has been updated and expanded to encourage future submission electronically on-line. Allowance has been made for the inclusion of Aims and Objectives, a full Curriculum Vitae and other information relating to a study trip or work placement, such as itinerary or the proposed work programme. This new procedure will fall within the Society's new sustaining goal of sharply improving ways of working and the revised form will be going live by the autumn.

Professional Gardeners Guild Study Tour to Japan - Spring 2008

Twenty five members of the PGG embarked on a study tour to the gardens of Japan at the end of March to learn more about the relationship between Japanese culture and horticulture, with particular emphasis on their history and development through the influence of nobility, Buddhist priests and landscape designers. Thirteen members of the group had been awarded funding from the *RHS Coke Trust Awards* to assist with their anticipated costs, following submission of individual bursary applications.



Led by PGG President John Humphris, the tour group visited stroll gardens, moss gardens, dry landscape gardens and gardens focusing on water, with pools, streams, islands and bridges, and in each one were stylishly pruned trees. The study trip included visits to thirteen of Kyoto's most renowned Buddhist Temples and Shinto shrines. These shrines have played an important role in the preservation of ancient trees and areas of woodland and, in some instances, whole mountains are considered sacred and often protected accordingly. Zen Buddhist gardens were intended to celebrate the beauty of the landscape in miniature using raked gravel to represent water and carefully placed rocks for mountains, with stunted trees to resemble those found in harsh natural terrain. The final visit to Kyoto Botanic Garden centred on the large collection of cherries—both species and hybrids.

The tour was such a great success that there are plans to run a similar group tour next year, thus giving additional PGG members, who may also find the total cost too high to fund the trip themselves, the opportunity to apply for RHS bursary funding.

QUICK TIP FOR TRAVEL QUOTES!!

When booking your flights, try researching some of the following internet sites for more competitive quotations:
www.opodo.co.uk; expedia.co.uk; [trailfinders](http://trailfinders.com); travelocity.co.uk; JustTheFlight.co.uk, [dialaflight](http://dialaflight.com);
Ebookers.com; flightseverywhere.co.uk; lastminute.co.uk



RHS Photographic Bursary

Winner of the *RHS Photographic Bursary* 2008 was **Justina Burnett**, a former solicitor who in 2005 decided to further her interest in photography by undertaking a part-time postgraduate course in Photography at the Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, which she completed in 2006. However, Justina acknowledges that it was another year before she had the confidence to hand in her notice at work and become a freelance photographer.

Justina is currently developing a body of fine art work, as well as a commercial practice as an editorial garden photographer and seeks to reveal the natural world in a personal and innovative way, creating fine art prints with a botanical element. Her work explores the physical processes which contribute directly to the making of the image.

For the past year, Justina has been recording the changing weather conditions of Kensington Gardens. The image shown below was taken last December, when it was misty and the visibility poor, so that it took several attempts before she achieved the shot she was after.

Winning the *RHS Photographic Bursary* in 2008 will assist Justina with the anticipated costs of mounting and exhibiting her work at one of the RHS Shows.



Winter morning fog—Kensington Gardens December 2007

Justina Burnett



Lime Leaf

Justina Burnett



Justina at the Chelsea Flower Show 2008

www.justinaburnett.com.

RECENT BURSARY AWARDS

29 applications were received for the May 2008 Bursaries Meeting, for which 19 awards were made totalling **£25,295**.

17 applications were received for the August 2008 Bursaries Meeting, for which **13** awards were made totalling **£16,290**.

Bursary application closing dates 2008/2009

A bursary application should be submitted before one of the following closing dates, to ensure it is eligible for consideration by the RHS Bursaries Advisory Committee:

30 September 2008
15 December 2008
31 March 2009
30 June 2009

The completed form should be submitted by e-mail to: bursaries@rhs.org.uk or alternatively by post to:
Secretary of the RHS Bursaries Advisory Committee, RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey, GU23 6QB

"There is no spot of ground, however arid, that cannot be tamed into such a state as may give an impression of beauty and delight"

Gertrude Jekyll

