



## Burma Skincare Initiative

Registered Charity in England & Wales: 1187197

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### **PRESS PACK: Burma Skincare Initiative Spirit of Partnership Sanctuary Garden. Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show - Tues 21 to Sat 25 May 2024.**

This pack contains, press release, sponsor quotes, garden details and links, notes to editors.

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#### **Putting Myanmar and skin health on the world stage; Chelsea's first Burmese and skin-themed garden**

- Sanctuary Garden (12m x 7m). Designed by Helen Olney and built by Conquest Creative Spaces
- The garden will relocate to Dulwich College (SE London). It will provide a tranquil space in a busy school, and be enjoyed by the community and visitors. The responsibility for it is already leading to pupils reflecting on medical, environmental, historical and social issues in a new and deeper way.
- Key plants include Magnolia porcelain dove, white Mulberry, water mint, snakebark maple.
- Garden illustrations and a plant list can be found at the end of this web link [here](#) we can also send a PDF
- Dermatologists and specialist nurses will be welcoming visitors to the garden during the week.
- Press call: 11.25am at site number 282, Royal Hospital Way. A Burmese dancer, in costume and wearing a floral headdress which includes flowers from the garden, is performing a traditional solo.



**THE designer, the charity and the sponsors behind the first Burmese and skin-themed garden at the world's most famous flower show say it's a unique opportunity to put Burma and skin health in the spotlight.**

The Burma Skincare Initiative 'Spirit of Partnership Garden' tells the story of a UK based charity helping healthcare workers in Myanmar treat children and adults with painful and debilitating skin conditions.



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The charity does this through an innovative global partnership which is providing research, education, and clinical services to dermatologists working in one of the world's poorest health care systems. Less than 50 dermatologists and three dermatology centres serve 55 million people in Burma, also known as Myanmar.

The charity's co-founder, Professor Chris Griffiths OBE, said: "Skin disease has a major impact on a person's quality of life, their mental health and it severely limits their ability to work. In Myanmar, we met many people, including hundreds of children in orphanages, with skin diseases. Their suffering and resilience motivated us to improve their access to skincare in the country through partnerships between international and local dermatology communities and industry."

Co-founder, Dr Su Lwin, added: "My beautiful country faces many challenges. I am absolutely thrilled that through the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, we are able to put Myanmar and skin health on the world stage. This is also the first time a garden at Chelsea tells the story of skin disease, and the importance of partnership in its management. We hope people love it."

Garden designer Helen Olney, working with landscaper Conquest Creative Spaces, has juggled her day job, to create her Chelsea debut. She said: "The garden is full of texture, including timber from a Thames jetty, crumbling red bricks and weathered stone with moss and lichen. Along with plants such as *Acer davidii* and *Betula utilis* (Himalayan birch), they represent skin disease. All the plants are found in Burma and grow happily in the UK and many have value for wildlife. The planting is naturalistic in a palette of greens, lilacs, yellows and whites. The diversity of Myanmar is shown through different planting zones and features. That includes the part-ruined 'stupa', a spiritual structure found across Myanmar, which symbolise the challenging environments in which the BSI work. A stilt house, above a water lily pool, indicates the sanctuary the charity provides. Seating is inspired by a letter in the Burmese alphabet meaning 'coming together'. This is how this garden came about, and how the charity works," added Helen.

### **SPONSOR DETAILS AND QUOTES**

Main sponsor: Burma Skincare Initiative with the support of Sanofi, British Dermatological Nursing Group, No. 7 Beauty Company and Almirall. Additional Sponsors: The Devonshire Clinic, Skin Health Alliance, Lahpet. Supporters: Royal College of Physicians, International League of Dermatological Societies, British Association of Dermatologists, Consultant Connect.

Mark Winter, Managing Director of No7 Beauty Company: "No7 Beauty Company's relationship with the Burma Skincare Initiative started in 2020 when we sponsored the first dermatologist conference in Myanmar. We share a mutual passion for educating people on the maintenance of skin health and we are delighted to recognise the important work of the Burma Skincare Initiative through our support of the 'Spirit of Partnership' Garden."

Lucy Moorhead, Nurse Consultant in Inflammatory Skin Disease for the British Dermatological Nursing Group: "Since 2019 we have been proud to have an association with this important charity. From teaching nurses in Myanmar, to delivering online global training and developing educational video. We're excited about where our continuing collaboration will take us, including this opportunity to help promote dermatology partnership and highlight the impact skin disease has on both adults and children. We are also looking forward to spreading the message how valuable dermatology nursing is at the show."

Rippon Ubhi, Sanofi Country Lead & General Manager, UK and Ireland: "SANOFI is committed to supporting patients where they need us the most. Our partnership with The Burma Skincare Initiative aims to raise awareness and support the country's urgent need for healthcare professionals and clinics to attend to people living and struggling with skin diseases. Sanofi has a long legacy in immunology research, and we're excited to continue pushing



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boundaries in this field. We believe immunology holds the key to unlocking a new era of dermatological care and solutions. However, we recognize the burden placed on individuals by skin diseases often seen as 'cosmetic.' We are committed to elevating the conversation around these conditions and developing innovative treatment options, aiming for improved quality of life for patients. The Chelsea Flower Show is an innovative and creative opportunity to raise awareness of the important work the Burma Skin Initiative is doing. We are proud of this partnership and hope this initiative will help raise awareness of this important issue."

President of the Royal College of Physicians, Dr Sarah Clarke, said: "The RCP has a strong tradition of supporting doctors across the globe, with 19% of RCP members based outside of the UK. We are proud to support the BSI team as they highlight and tackle the healthcare challenges faced by the people and physicians in Burma/Myanmar. Plants and flowers have played a key role throughout the history of medicine and our own garden in Regent's Park, London, is home to many medicinal plants from around the world including the butterfly flower, Arabian jasmine and Chusan palm, which are native to Burma. I am sure this Chelsea showcase will be exceptional."

James Stalley, Executive Director - Strategy, Operation & Partnerships at the Skin Health Alliance: "As an international champion of skin health, we want everyone to have access to the best advice to help them care for their skin. We are deeply passionate about skin health research, education and outcomes for the many millions who suffer from skin conditions globally. We are proud to support the BSI's initiative and endorse their aim of bringing first-class dermatology services to the people of Myanmar."

Jonathan Patrick, CEO of Consultant Connect, said: "We are proud to support the Burma Skincare Initiative in its mission to improve access to skin doctors in Myanmar. Our teledermatology platform connects Myanmar healthcare workers with dermatology specialists in the UK to help diagnose and manage patients with skin disease. In a country where access to healthcare is a limited and where diseases such as leprosy are still common, this is a crucial step in giving patients the care they need. The data gathered via our app will also support the BSI team develop training around common conditions to help Myanmar fight its skincare crisis. It is fantastic to see the BSI team celebrating its work at the Chelsea Flower Show."

Dr Conal Perrett, Consultant Dermatologist at The Devonshire Clinic: "We are delighted to be able to support the Burma Skincare Initiative Spirit of Partnership garden at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show. My friends and colleagues Dr Su Lwin and Professor Chris Griffiths are inspirational individuals who deserve praise and recognition for the commitment and focus on such an important mission"

### NOTES TO EDITORS

Garden Designer Helen Olney: Helen works as a digital designer (websites and apps). Having studied planting design at the London College of Garden Design in 2020, she entered and won the college's alumni competition to design a sanctuary garden for the Burma Skincare Initiative, at RHS Chelsea Flower Show. This is her first show garden.

Co-founder Dr. Su Mar Lwin, a Burmese-born dermatology registrar and honorary lecturer at St John's Institute of Dermatology and King's College London came to the UK at the age of 15, leaving her family behind. It gave her a unique perspective on life and a deep appreciation of life opportunities. Su trained in medicine and dermatology in London. She is a trainee dermatologist at St John's Institute of Dermatology, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, and Honorary Lecturer at King's College London. Her research focuses on the development and clinical applications of advanced (stem cell and gene) and repurposed therapies for rare and common skin diseases. Su's other passion is global health dermatology.



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Co-founder Prof. Chris Griffiths is a consultant dermatologist at King's College Hospital, London and Emeritus Professor of Dermatology at the University of Manchester. He trained in dermatology in London and Michigan and his research has led to new treatments for the skin disease psoriasis. Chris developed a deep interest in global health and migrant skin health following his involvement with the International League for Dermatological Societies to whom he is a special advisor on global health research and policy. He is the Director of the Global Psoriasis Atlas, and his interest in global skincare finds him working in refugee camps and leading skin disease surveys in many countries around the world. In 2018 he was honoured with the award of an OBE, for services to dermatology.

About the Burma Skincare Initiative: Following decades of political unrest, Myanmar grapples with profound healthcare disparities amid an under-resourced system. Healthcare in Myanmar is ranked amongst the lowest in the world by the WHO and poor access to skincare is prevalent. There is approximately one dermatologist per 611,000 people (even before the military coup of 2021), compared to one dermatologist per 68,000 in the United Kingdom. People with skin problems may need to travel great distances, sometimes taking many days to reach the nearest dermatology centre. With the many challenges that the country faces in dermatology, the BSI strives to connect the Myanmar dermatology community with the outside world. Already there are successful examples of sustainable collaborations in education, research and clinical services. Founded in 2019, the charity's vision is that one day Myanmar will have a first-class dermatology service for all of its population.

Case studies: On visits to Myanmar, Dr. Su Lwin and Prof. Chris Griffiths, have seen adults with life-threatening blistering skin diseases. They have also seen hundreds of orphans of war with treatable diseases like scabies and scalp ringworm, causing stigma and severe disfigurement. They also saw work related skin conditions, such as hand eczema and irritant skin conditions in pearl farm and textile industry workers. Through tele-medicine, they provided consultation to an 11-year-old girl with long-standing tree bark-like skin lesions, and a six-year-old boy with rapidly growing facial skin tumours. Both are treatable and preventable in the UK. The BSI is helping dermatology colleagues on the ground in Myanmar through a number of initiatives. These include supporting continuing medical education and developing a dermatology curriculum for medical students; video-workshops and creating access to specialist tele dermatology services. It is the start of a journey to ensure better access to skin health services in the vulnerable yet beautiful country that is Myanmar.

About Myanmar, also known as Burma: It is a country in southeast Asia, bordered by China to the North, Laos and Thailand in the east, and India and Bangladesh in the west. Its diverse landscape is made up of mountainous regions in the north, an arid central plateau, and subtropical jungle in eastern Shan and Karen states. Plus the fertile flatlands of the Irrawaddy delta region and the Andaman Islands in the south. Rich in natural resources, and with more than 130 ethnic groups, Myanmar is one of the most diverse countries in Asia.

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