



SEPTEMBER 2010 SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER

CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT: QUEEN ELIZABETH OPENS BRITISH GARDEN IN NEW YORK

In 2002 the St. George's Society and the British Consulate-General in New York joined together and formed a new entity, the British Memorial Garden Trust Limited, to design and construct a unique space in Lower Manhattan to commemorate the 67 British/Commonwealth victims of 9/11. The Garden was also designed to embody the numerous links uniting the United States and the United Kingdom and to memorialize those British and American soldiers who gave their lives defending our common values.

The Garden was designed by noted British landscape architects, Julian and Isabel Bannerman, and their concept was approved by local authorities, notably Community Board 1 and the City's Parks and Recreation Department. As the Garden slowly began to take shape, the project attracted high-level support. Numerous members of the St. George's Society donated money toward the completion of this unique and ambitious project, which also enjoyed the support of a host of British-American organizations, including The Pilgrims of the United States, the Daughters of the British Empire, and the St. Andrew's Society in the State of New York. The construction itself experienced unanticipated difficulties and delays, as many of the materials were imported from the United Kingdom specially for the project, and much preparation work needed to be done with the ground lying beneath Hanover Square, before the plantings, benches and stone paving above the ground were able to be created and installed.

The Garden has been unusual in attracting the attention and support of several members of the British Royal Family. The Princess Royal visited first in 2003 and brought with her some plantings from the royal palaces of Britain. The Duke of York attended a ceremony in 2006. The Prince of Wales, the Garden's Royal Patron, and the Duchess of Cornwall unveiled a dedicatory marker in 2005. Prince Harry planted a tree there in 2009. Finally, on 6 July 2010, Queen Elizabeth II formally opened the Garden while on a rare state visit to New York.

During her brief stop at Hanover Square, the Queen and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, escorted by Sir Nigel Sheinwald, KCMG, the British Ambassador to the United States, Sir Alan Collins, KCVO, CMG, the British Consul-General in New York, and Mayor Michal R. Bloomberg, among other dignitaries, met with city officials, donors and contributors to the Garden, relatives of those who died on that tragic day, and many members of St. George's Society who were instrumental in bringing the Garden to fruition: Victor E. Stewart, President of the St. George's Society; William R. Miller, OBE, Chairman of the British Garden Memorial Trust; John C. Harvey, Managing Director and CEO; Rodney N.M. Johnson, MBE, Vice-Chairman and Chief Financial Officer; Garden Trust board members Peter Hopkinson, Isabel M. Carden, Joe A. Smith and Luke Parker Bowles; Camilla G. Hellman, MBE, Chairman Emerita; Arthur J. Rawl, MBE, former Chairman; and Diana M. Collins, former director. Other notable personages present included the Society's Advisory Council Chairman, Martin J. Sullivan, OBE and Garden Founder Donor Francis Finlay, OBE.

The Society's involvement in the British Garden at Hanover Square might well end up ranking with another historical event in the Society's history: its role in the founding of St. Luke's Hospital of New York, which is now part and parcel of the fabric of the city. The Garden is sure to become a similarly established New York institution as the Wall Street area is slowly but surely transformed into more of a full-time residential area. The Garden brings needed charm to Hanover Square, and provides an attractive and restful spot for both residents and visitors to enjoy, as well as to reflect upon and remember the longstanding ties, traditions and sacrifices that were the inspiration for the Garden's creation.

The photographs of the Royal Visit in this special edition e-newsletter commemorate a proud and very special day in the Society's long history.

