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BEST IN SHOW: Above, Horatio's Garden at the 2023 Chelsea Flower Show. Inset, how part of the new Sheffield garden will look.

New home for charity's award-winning garden

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FEATURES WRITER

A YEAR ago, it won Best in Show at the world-famous Chelsea Flower Show. Now, work is under way to bring the bigger, permanent version of a charity's showpiece garden to the Princess Royal Spinal Injuries Centre Unit, in Sheffield.

Horatio's Garden founders Dr Olivia Chapple and David Chapple earlier this month celebrated the start of the construction of its Sheffield and East garden, which will feature bespoke elements inspired by the history, geography and industry of its Yorkshire home.

The charity works to bring recuperative outdoor spots to spinal centres around the UK and is named in memory of the founders' son Horatio, who died at the age of 17 after being attacked by a polar bear while on an expedition on the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard in 2011.

He was a volunteer at the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre, in Salisbury, Wiltshire, and it was originally the teenager's idea to provide a garden for patients – the first one opened in his honour in 2012.

The new wheelchair-accessible garden at Northern General Hospital, in Sheffield, supported by Project Giving Back, has been designed by Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg of Harris Bugg Studio – who also created the preview version at Chelsea – while it will be built by Sheffield-based

contractors RLX Construction and project managed by Gleeds.

In 2023, the charity's Main Avenue garden was awarded both a gold medal and the Best in Show at RHS Chelsea Flower Show, and the charity was back there with a trade stand at last week's event.

Dominic West, Sheffield-born film and TV actor and appeal patron for Horatio's Garden Sheffield and East, said: "I was lucky enough to see the Best in Show winning garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show last year and to talk to the designers Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg and to Dr Olivia Chapple about all the wonderful elements in the garden.

"It is particularly interesting to me because I'm from Sheffield and the garden is being created in Sheffield.

"The bronze casting of the cutlery moulds for the water feature are so striking to me as my grandfather was a Master Cutler in Sheffield.

"Horatio's Garden is an amazing charity, formed in memory of a wonderful young man who came up with the brilliant and simple idea to create a garden in which people with spinal injuries could find spiritual nourishment and recuperation in beautiful surroundings."

George Robinson, the actor best known for his role in Netflix hit show *Sex Education*, also supported the garden's appeal before Chelsea in 2023 because he had recovered in the Sheffield unit following a life-changing rugby accident in South Africa.

The garden being created now will be an

accessible and therapeutic place for people such injuries and long stays in hospital.

More than 360 in-patients, their family and friends, thousands of outpatients, as well as over 250 NHS staff looking after them will benefit from it every year once it opens in 2025, says the charity.

The garden has been funded by the National Garden Scheme, Project Giving Back, charitable trusts and foundations and other supporters.

The charity is now fundraising to ensure that Horatio's Garden Sheffield and East – which will benefit people from the West Midlands to East Anglia, and South Yorkshire to Lincolnshire – can thrive for years to come. Eventually, the charity is aiming to provide gardens at all 11 spinal injury centres in the UK.

To date it has opened seven gardens for people in the South West, Scotland, Stoke Mandeville, the Midlands, London and South East, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Sheffield will be the eighth of these, and is hoped to be about much bigger than the one previewed last year at Chelsea, with features making reference to the city's history such as the cutlery industry and the Rivelin Valley.

Dr Olivia Chapple, who is also chair of Trustees at Horatio's Garden, said: "We know how much of a difference our gardens make to people reflecting and adjusting after a life-changing spinal injury.

"Horatio's Garden Sheffield and East will be a special place with a profoundly positive impact for people, their families and NHS staff and we are so thrilled to bring our Best in Show winning garden at RHS Chelsea to the heart of Sheffield to benefit so many people every year."



ENVIRONMENT DIGEST



AVAILS

Energy firm's apple tree promise

A YORKSHIRE company has pledged to plant 1,000 apple trees at schools across the region.

Baildon-based commercial energy consultancy and brokerage Avails Energy has made the pledge and the first 15 trees were planted earlier this month at Woodhouse Grove School, in Apperley Bridge, West Yorkshire. Avails director Rory Ingham, pictured.

The trees were supplied by Yorkshire Garden Centre Group and planted with help from school staff and pupils on its eco council. The school started working with Avails Energy earlier in the year on its new green electricity contract.

Michelle Howard, energy and sustainability manager at Woodhouse Grove, said the school is "thrilled to now have two orchards at the school which will provide fresh apples for pu-

pils and staff for many years to come". Avails Energy is now searching for more schools across the district which would like apple tree planting.

It is part of the firm's mission to reduce carbon emissions and provide free and healthy snacks for school children.

Planting 1,000 apple trees across the county will produce more than 15 million apples over the tree's life time as well as releasing 15,000 tonnes of oxygen and absorbing 10,000-20,000 tonnes of carbon every year, while at the same time providing food and homes for pollinators and wildlife, says the company.

Get in touch with Avails Energy on 01274 060847 or email hello@avails.co.uk if you are interested in the scheme.

Region stars in electric car study

WEST Yorkshire is in the top five UK regions leading the switch to electric cars, with the area registering more than 625,000 electric cars between 2009 and 2023, a study claims.

Using data sourced from the Department for Transport and Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, insurance firm Howden Insurance calculated the total number of plug-in cars registered in each UK local authority over the 14 years.

The local authorities were then ranked from the highest to the lowest number of registered plug-in cars. The plug-in cars included all fuel types, body types and keepership types.

The total number of electric cars registered in the UK during this period is 13,485,000, with Greater Manchester having the most at 1,045,910. Outer London registered a total of 908,775 plug-in cars during that time.

Third is West Yorkshire, with 625,234 registered electric cars. Leeds was the location welcoming electric cars the most, with 487,775 plug-in cars registered in the city between 2009 and 2023.

A Howden Insurance spokesman said that with greater awareness of the impact of petrol and diesel vehicles, "interest in electric vehicles or low-emission vehicles has soared in the UK".

Celebrating the wonders of pollen

POLLEN is being explored in a new way in a partnership between the University of York and RHS Garden Harlow Carr.

A new exhibition at the garden near Harrogate uses experimental 3D printing techniques to explore the microscopic world of pollen to help reveal the roles it plays in our world.

With fascinating images and 3D printed models, researchers hope it will help visitors discover the wonder of pollen.

Displayed across eight panels throughout the garden, the 3D pollen models are produced using an experimental technique called confocal laser scanning microscopy, which takes

dozens of thin cross-section images through a pollen grain then uses them to reconstruct a model of its surface.

These surface models can then be 3D-printed. The exhibition also showcases ultra-high-magnification images from scanning electron microscopy, developed for the PalDat project by the Society for the Promotion of Palynological Research, in Austria.

The research has been made accessible and inclusive for all ages.

The exhibition runs until September. Normal garden admission applies, but the show is free for RHS members. Bookings can be made online.



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