

Annual Report 2023



Contents

President's welcome	3
To promote the profession of horticulture and the professionalism of those working in the industry	4
To act as an authoritative body; consulting with government and other policy making bodies on matters of interest or concern to professional horticulturists	5
To confer recognised status upon professionally qualified and experienced horticulturists	6
List of Chartered horticulturists	7
To promote educational and training opportunities and encourage the development of all disciplines within horticulture	8
To co-operate with other bodies on matters of common concern	9
To disseminate information on matters affecting the profession and provide opportunities for discussion amongst horticulturists	10
Financial report	11
Regional Branches	12
Branch updates	13
Organisation and governance	14
Council of Trustees	14
Trustees elected in 2023	15
Contact details	16

President's Welcome

Welcome to the Annual Report for 2023.

In 2023 it felt that finally we returned to some sense of normality after the global pandemic and that we made significant progress in our strategic aims. Properly representing the profession, the development and progress of members, their education and their careers are at the heart of our ambition and the Council of Trustees, Management Board and Development Officer have continued working towards delivery of these.

I would like to say a very sincere thank you to them for all they have done in the past year and the excellent support from our secretariat at the British Growers Association.

The Institute relies upon its members who willingly give time and expertise and in particular the branch Chairs and Committees who have continued to volunteer their time, ensure that all over the UK and Ireland we have a network of professionals supporting the Institute.

We now also have thriving special interest groups which extend the reach of the Institute and the dynamism and drive of the members within these has been impressive. Education, Early Careers and Social and Therapeutic Horticulture groups are all extending our reach and extending inclusion - the message that plants and horticulturists are needed to secure our future could not be more important.

The House of Lords Enquiry this year gave us hope that Horticulture was being listened to, the responses from the Government are hopeful and we will continue to work and represent the profession.

I commend this Annual Report to all.



**David Richardson CHort FCIHort
President**



To promote the profession of horticulture and the professionalism of those working in the industry

Throughout the year of 2023 the Chartered Institute of Horticulture has focused on nurturing our community of professional horticulturists, and the planning and delivery of events that support this objective.

The Institute has built a strong performance for careers events, as evidenced by the capacity audience at the 'Grow Careers Scotland' event this year. Guest speakers included well-known horticulturists from the popular media and from within the horticulture profession including Adam Frost and Arit Anderson alongside a range of early-career horticulturists. Support from the trade was also strong, underscoring the success of this model of event within the UK. In addition to Scotland, shows have been supported in Harrogate, the RHS shows at Tatton Park and Chelsea, the South West Growers Show, the Garden Landscape Amenity Sports Turf Trade Event in Ireland, and various others. In addition, Institute members have been invited to speak at a range of careers days across the UK, promoting the profession and career opportunities it can provide.

Among other activities, the Institute's regional branches have continued to support the Young Horticulturist of the Year (YHoY) competition, efficiently organising and running regional finals for this annual event. The Grand Final was held within Emmanuel College in the University of Cambridge, coinciding with the coronation of His Majesty, The King. The YHoY competition emphasises the value of specific learning and knowledge within our younger cohort, those who will go on to be the backbone of the profession into the future.

We have continued to support the development of the training frameworks within horticulture, providing guidance and assistance in writing standards, validating materials and supporting awarding bodies. Regional branches are generally actively involved with their local training providers, engaging with and advising students and graduates. This is a fundamentally important function of the Institute, particularly in terms of building the 'Green Skills' cohort for future decades, in support of the United Nations' ambition to develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society.

Through support and promotion of the 'Future Gardeners' programme of the Bankside Open Spaces Trust, we hope to encourage progress towards higher levels of diversity within the profession, reflective of the UK's rich mix of cultures and communities.

Helping people to understand the distinction between the trained professional discipline of horticulture as compared to the domestic recreational gardener has continued to be an area of focus for Institute communications. Achieving an awareness of the extensive breadth and depth of the horticultural industry, and the need for recognition of the professional qualified horticulturist will continue to be a prominent theme into the future. The Institute's President and Vice President have provided public commentary on this topic through various media.

Richard Barley MBE CHort MCIHort
President Elect

Young Horticulturist of the Year

2023 was an exciting year for the Young Horticulturist of the Year competition with an overhaul to the regional and Grand Final question layout. A new round was added, the subjects updated and a new approach to the final quick-fire round implemented, which resulted in an electric finish to the Grand Final!

The Grand Final was held at Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge on Saturday 7th May. Brendon Sims MCIHort, Emmanuel College's Head Gardener, acted as Question Master as the 8 finalists competed in the various question and identification rounds.

The 2023 winner was **Lewis Barrett** from Royal Botanic Garden Kew. Lewis receives a £2500 bursary from the Percy Throver Trust provided by the Shropshire Horticultural Society, enabling him to undertake a study tour of his choosing. There were only 3 points separating 1st and 2nd place, a worthy second place was achieved by James Douglass MCIHort from RBGE and the third place runner-up was Daisy Baggs of The Newt in Somerset.

The event continues to showcase and inspire the great young talent in the industry with substantial prizes for winning participants. Many thanks to all of the sponsors, regional organisers and participants who make it possible.

Victoria George MCIHort
National YHoY Coordinator



Young Horticulturist of the Year: Lewis Barrett



To act as an authoritative body; consulting with Government and other policy making bodies on matters of interest or concern to professional horticulturists

Consultation and advocacy on behalf of the industry remains one of the fundamental purposes of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture. Members and officers of the Institute continue to provide an industry-led voice across the United Kingdom and Ireland, representing and using opportunities to engage with other professional bodies.

Helen Sessions CHort MCIHort, the Institute's Development Officer has made a significant contribution in formalising much of this representation in the past year. A considerable contribution, backed by extensive membership consultation, was made to the research and report undertaken by the House of Lords Horticultural Sector Committee Inquiry on the horticulture industry. The government has since responded to this, and the Institute will continue its representation in ensuring that the recommendations are followed-up.

Representation continues through the Environmental Horticulture Group (EHG) Round Table and at the EHG Education and Employment Subgroup.

In addition to this we also provided evidence to several UK government consultations, including: The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee inquiries into urban green spaces, and land based education and careers, The Public Accounts Committee's inquiry on cross-government working, The DEFRA consultation on protecting hedgerows and the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee inquiry on children, young people, and the built environment.

In Scotland, the Institute was represented by members, George Gilchrist FCIHort, David Knott CHort FCIHort and Raoul Curtis-Machin MCIHort at the Scottish Parliament Gardening and Horticulture Cross Party Group meeting convened by Rachael Hamilton MSP. The event included presentations and discussions on biodiversity, skills and workforce coinciding with an HTA event at the Scottish Parliament.

North West and North Wales Branch Chairman, Gareth Manning FCIHort, attended the inaugural Lantra/Landex Land-based & Environment Learner Awards in November and was able to network with leaders from across the land-based sector at this event. The Institute is proud to support these awards, for which we facilitated the judging of the nominations.

We have continued our work with the qualification and training organisations IFATE and OFQUAL. The training of new entrants to the industry and the importance of apprentices to all sectors of horticulture cannot be over-emphasised and the Institute has been asked to join the employer's handbook. The extensive application has been completed and next steps will be further explored in 2024.

Regional representation is made through our Trustees and council members: George Gilchrist FCIHort (Scottish government), Paul Mann MCIHort (Welsh government) and Gabriel Roe FCIHort (Ireland) where the branch worked with the Special Committee on Agriculture within the Irish Parliament which reported on peat growing media replacement for the horticulture industry.

The Institute is proud to be a signatory to the horticulture sector EDI Charter and attended an event at RHS Garden Wisley to share baseline survey results which will form an action plan to improve diversity and inclusion in the industry.

Other Officers and Members continue to hold positions of responsibility and trusteeships within other organisations including TIAH, Plant Heritage, Professional Gardeners Guild, Britain in Bloom, Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association, RBG Kew and RHS committees ensuring that the voice of professional horticulture is widely heard.

**David Richardson CHort FCIHort
President**

To confer recognised status upon professionally qualified and experienced horticulturists

The Chartered Institute of Horticulture recognises the outstanding professional achievements of horticulturists at all stages of their careers. Achieving Chartered Horticulturist status remains the pinnacle of professional standing; demonstrating attainment of the highest calibre of professional standing and signalling a commitment to ongoing professional development. In 2023 Chartered status was achieved by **Colin Skelly CHort MCIHort**, **Richard Barley CHort MCIHort** and **Jason Daff CHort MCIHort**.

Fellowship of the Institute is awarded by Council to individuals who have achieved high levels of professional achievement or who have made a significant contribution to the industry. In 2023 Council ratified the Fellowships of **Michael McQuade FCIHort** and **Sue Wood FCIHort**.

The President's Award for 2023 was presented to **Chris Bird FCIHort** by outgoing President Susan Nicholas FCIHort. The Award recognises Chris' longstanding contribution to horticultural education and to the Young Horticulturist of the Year competition.

The Institute is proud to recognise and encourage new talent within the industry through our Pam Pointer Prize which rewards outstanding achievements of horticulture students. In 2023 four winners of the Pam Pointer Prize were awarded the opportunity to attend an in-person technical conference to further their development and to network with industry professionals. **Joe Lofthouse** (RHS, Harlow Carr), **Melanie Davies** (Plumpton College), **Jasmine Devereaux** (Sparsholt College) and **Donné Perold** (Pershore College).

The Norah Stucken Award is awarded to an innovative horticultural project that that has made a positive contribution to the industry. In 2023 the award was made to the **Bankside Open Spaces Trust** in recognition of their valuable contribution made in encouraging horticultural careers in traditionally underrepresented communities.

Throughout the UK and Ireland Members and Fellows are recognised with a range of prestigious honours and awards. In Scotland **Lewis Normand CHort MCIHort** was elected President of the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society and Institute Trustee **George Gilchrist FCIHort** was awarded the society's Dr Andrew Duncan Medal in recognition of George's contribution to horticultural education in Scotland.

The Northern Branch awarded its annual commendation to **Sarah Owen-Hughes MCIHort**, Head Gardener at Ridding Park Hotel and Spa in Harrogate. The Commendation was presented in recognition of Sarah's passionate commitment to promoting horticulture and horticultural careers in the North of England.

Honours were bestowed on several distinguished horticulturists in 2023, including CIH Vice President and Director of Gardens at RBG Kew **Richard Barley MBE CHort MCIHort**, former Ireland Branch Chair and Head Gardener at Hillsborough Castle **Claire Woods MBE CHort FCIHort**, Nurseryman **Raymond Evison CBE FCIHort** and Plant Heritage Trustee **Catherine Penny MBE MCIHort**.

Jason Daff CHort MCIHort
Honorary Secretary



Chartered Horticulturists

David Adlam CHort FCIHort
Tom Angel CHort MCIHort
Steve Arnold CHort MCIHort
Gareth Austin CHort MCIHort
Richard Barley CHort MCIHort
Ian Barnes CHort MCIHort
Sue Barnes CHort MCIHort
Heather Barrett-Mold CHort FCIHort
Matthew Bartlett CHort MCIHort
Peter Beagan CHort MCIHort
Stephen Bernhard CHort (Rtd) FCIHort
Adam Blunt CHort MCIHort
Gerald Bonner CHort FCIHort
Stefan Buczacki CHort FCIHort
Sarah Byrne CHort MCIHort
Franziska Cheeseman CHort MCIHort
Brian Cheng CHort MCIHort
Mark Chester CHort MCIHort
Christine Ching CHort (Rtd) MCIHort
Andrew Cotterill CHort MCIHort
Brian Crane CHort FCIHort
Joseph Croke CHort MCIHort
Kenneth Crowther CHort MCIHort
Steven Cuthill CHort MCIHort
Jason Daff CHort MCIHort
Stephen Davies CHort FCIHort
Geoffrey Deeble CHort MCIHort
Steven Desmond CHort FCIHort
David Domoney CHort FCIHort
Owen Doyle CHort FCIHort
Gordon Eastham CHort MCIHort
Gerald Edwards CHort MCIHort
Caroline Elliott-Kingston CHort FCIHort
Mark Evison CHort MCIHort
Anna Eyres CHort FCIHort
Mark Finnegan CHort MCIHort
Andrew Fisher Tomlin CHort FCIHort
Emanuel Flecken CHort MCIHort
Marcus Forster CHort MCIHort
Edward Freeman CHort MCIHort
Charles Funke CHort FCIHort
Declan Gallagher CHort MCIHort
Carol Gordon-Alleyne CHort (Rtd) MCIHort
Francis Gordon-Alleyne CHort MCIHort
David Gregory CHort MCIHort
Samantha Harvey CHort MCIHort
Frank Hawkins CHort MCIHort
Dorothy Hayden CHort MCIHort
Patrick Hegarty CHort MCIHort
Michael Higgins CHort MCIHort
Simon Higson CHort MCIHort
Colin Hindmarch CHort FCIHort
Joseph Howarth CHort MCIHort
Elaine Hughes CHort MCIHort
Theresa Huxley CHort FCIHort
Simon Jones CHort MCIHort
Donal Kearney CHort MCIHort
Ciaran Keaveny CHort MCIHort
Miranda Kingston CHort MCIHort
David Knott CHort FCIHort
Charalambos Kordatos CHort FCIHort
Ching Man Lau CHort MCIHort
Boaz Leung CHort (Rtd) MCIHort
Hoi Chi Li CHort MCIHort
Patrick Loh CHort MCIHort
Gerald Luckhurst CHort MCIHort
John Marsden CHort MCIHort
Andrew Maskell CHort MCIHort
Glynis Maynard-Bligouras CHort (Rtd) FCIHort
Valerie McBride-Munro CHort MCIHort
Stephen McCallum CHort MCIHort
Ian McDermott CHort MCIHort
Bryony Mills CHort MCIHort
Susan Minter CHort FCIHort
Paul Mooney CHort MCIHort
Leigh Morris CHort FCIHort
Harold Mycock CHort MCIHort
John Nicholls CHort MCIHort
Lewis Normand CHort MCIHort
William Notcutt CHort MCIHort
Colm O'Callaghan CHort MCIHort
Clive Parker CHort (Rtd) FCIHort
Mark Pollard CHort MCIHort
Colin Quinney CHort MCIHort
David Richardson CHort FCIHort
James Robinson CHort MCIHort
Barbara Segall CHort FCIHort
Helen Sessions CHort MCIHort
Mark Shaw CHort MCIHort
John Shropshire CHort FCIHort
William Simpson CHort (Rtd) FCIHort
Colin Skelly CHort MCIHort
Francis Squires CHort MCIHort
Paul Stacey CHort MCIHort
Lynn Stevens CHort FCIHort
Adrian Stockdale CHort FCIHort
Duncan Thomas CHort MCIHort
Kelly Thompson CHort MCIHort
George Thorburn CHort MCIHort
Nigel Thorne CHort FCIHort
Peter Thurman CHort (Rtd) FCIHort
Stanley TSUI Ka Hing CHort MCIHort
Keith Vernon CHort FCIHort
Richard Wassell CHort MCIHort
John Weir CHort FCIHort
Tom Wood CHort MCIHort
Claire Woods CHort FCIHort
Ching-tin Yu CHort (Rtd) MCIHort

To promote educational and training opportunities and encourage the development of all disciplines within horticulture

The visit program commenced in February when the Northern Branch arranged a tour of **Tudor Croft**, Guisborough, the private garden of galanthophile Michael Heagney. Mike has a collection of more than 250 cultivars and species of snowdrops in his garden that also boasts a beck, Japanese garden and mature woodland.

In March, Northern Branch members assembled at **Shipley College** in the UNESCO world heritage site of Saltaire Village. The college has been offering horticulture courses since the 1950's with a range of courses from Foundation to Level 3 across horticulture, garden design, floristry and social & therapeutic horticulture. Later, members visited **Robert's Park** on the banks of the river Aire. Also part of the Saltaire world heritage site the park includes several listed buildings and is used by the college as a teaching resource, especially for tree and shrub management techniques.

The West Midlands and South Wales Branch held a day of visits in the Vale of Evesham in April. Firstly to **Walcot Organic Nursery**, where the group learned about the production of organic traditional local varieties of dessert, cooking apples, cider and crab apples. Afterwards members visited the **TASK Training Academy** that specialises in providing landscaping and land-based courses. Managing Director Rupert Keys explained how he uses his experience and that of other specialists in the industry to teach the essential practical skills that all landscapers need to be successful in their businesses.

Provender Nurseries was the venue for the South East Branch visit in May. Liz Hughes, Marketing Manager led the tour of the nursery which predominantly supplies garden designers with a range of large and medium-sized trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. Stuart Tickner, Bio-Security Manager, described the complex rules and regulations involved in importing plants, and how the nursery has achieved the 'Plant Healthy' standard.

The Eastern Branch enjoyed a day of nursery visits in the Fens in May, visiting two large-scale plant and cut flower growers. Firstly, **Bridge Farm Nurseries** in Spalding a cutting-edge producer of over 10 million bedding plants and indoor plants for supermarkets and DIY chains. Later the branch returned to **Collison's Cut Flowers** of Terrington St Clement, the nursery produces 40 million stems of flowers annually, with tulips accounting for more than 70%. Both growers have invested heavily in automation to reduce reliance on manual labour.

The Institute's Annual General Meeting and Study Tour was held in May in the South West region, beginning with a tour of **The New Forest Fruit Company**, Hampshire. Here members learned about the commercial production of asparagus and strawberries from Production Manager Ashley Wensak. After a networking lunch members proceeded to **Hillier Trees**. James Hillier gave an overview of the production cycle from budding and grafting to transport of mature specimen trees. The next morning members reconvened at **Exbury Gardens**, for a personal tour led by Head Gardener Tom Clarke. Members enjoyed the kaleidoscopic colour of the azaleas and rhododendrons and discussed the challenges of ericaceous collections in the dry and hot south of England.

The South East Branch held its Annual Branch Meeting at **RHS Garden Wisley** in June which was followed by a tour of the gardens led by Branch Chair Gerry Edwards CHort MCIHort where members took in the latest developments on the site.

Also in June members from across the North of England assembled for a day of visits in the Humber region to two very different horticultural enterprises. Firstly, to **HMP Hull**, the 150-year-old Category B Prison. Our guide was Dave Wilson, horticulture lecturer who explained the various horticultural facilities and gardens. Up to 20 prisoners undertake an NVQ level 2 in horticulture as part of their rehabilitation, affording them valuable employability skills in the outside world. Members reconvened after a networking lunch at **Premier Plant Producers Ltd** in nearby Keyingham. A wholesale young plant propagator specialising in salads, brassicas, and more recently, tree saplings. The business now produces 16 million saplings a year for forestry and landscape customers, across a range of deciduous species.

Later in June the North West and North Wales Branch visited **Cholmondeley Castle Gardens** and enjoyed a tour with Head Gardener Barry Grain, who gave an overview of the garden's features and recent developments including the redevelopment of the Lavinia walk and regenerative practices used on the estate.

The Northern Branch enjoyed a guided tour of the redeveloped gardens at **Lowther Castle** in July. The tour was led by Head Gardener Andrea Brunsendorf, who explained the history of the Lowther estate, from its Edwardian exuberance, abandonment and wartime service. After more than fifty years in the wilderness, in 2008, Lowther's gardens were marked out for rescue with a 20-year landscape masterplan.

In August Scotland Branch members visited **Akre Tree Nursery** in Fife, described as the 'world's first verified carbon-negative tree nursery'. Renwick Drysdale, Akre's founder and Managing Director explained how Akre was responding to the pressing need for high quality trees to restore landscapes, improve biodiversity and help tackle climate change.

In September, the Northern Branch held its Annual Branch Meeting held at **Crook Hall** in the city of Durham, followed by a tour of the gardens by Ann Tulloch the Head Gardener. Members enjoyed the horticultural merits of this wonderful 'compartmentalised' garden with its amazing walled gardens crammed with plants and trees from all parts of our world.

Howard Nurseries and **Bressingham Gardens** were visited by the Eastern Branch in September. Christine Howard gave a tour of the extensive production and packing areas for a range of some 1,600 varieties of perennials. Around 30% are supplied bare root. In the afternoon members were treated to a personal tour of Bressingham Gardens by Adrian Bloom FCIHort who was able to share with us his unique, personal account of the development of the gardens by the Bloom family since the late 1940s.

Also, in September, the West Midlands and South Wales Branch visited **Birmingham Botanic Gardens**, they were welcomed by Head Gardener Wayne Williams MCIHort who detailed the ongoing glasshouse restoration projects. Afterwards members proceeded to **Highbury Mansion** where Lucy Bailey-Wright explained how a £5 million lottery-funded restoration project will help restore some of the main planted areas over a 10-year plan.

Jason Daff CHort MCIHort
Honorary Secretary



To co-operate with other bodies on matters of common concern

We are actively collaborating with like-minded charitable organisations, industry groups and state agencies to plan events and combine training to broaden our offer to members. An excellent example of this collaboration took place in Ireland where the David Robinson memorial lecture was held as a joint event with **Bord Bia** at the **Teagasc** Ashtown research station, with in excess of 100 delegates in attendance. Also in Ireland, the annual branch study tour included five visits over two days where the Institute combined forces with **Mayo County Council** and members from the **Association of Social Therapeutic Horticulture Facilitators in Ireland** to organise the study tour and combine visits.

Our close working with **PlantNetwork** has delivered some fantastic events and training in 2023. The Tree Forum event at The University of Birmingham saw an exciting line-up of expert speakers covering a range of topics from tree selection to tree health. Our joint 'Spotlight on Bursaries' webinar featured presentations from **Colegrave Seabrook Foundation**, **Merlin Trust**, **RHS bursaries** and **The Professional Gardeners' Trust** on the range of grants and bursaries available for funding further training and travel. Additionally we held five training sessions focused on the use of social media from understanding the jargon to training sessions on each of the main platforms widely in use now. Members are encouraged to access through the members portal.

Collaborating to inspire

Institute President David Richardson participated in **The Royal Parks Guild's Apprentice and Trainee Discovery Day**, a joint initiative between the Royal Parks Guild and Historic Royal Palaces in partnership with The Tree Council and their Force for Nature Campaign. The Discovery Day in 2023 was held at Hampton Court and the focus of the day was Historic Landscapes Past, Present & Future. Bringing together students and trainees working in all aspects of horticulture for an inspiring day with opportunities for them to network and expand their professional connections.

Grow Careers Scotland is now the largest professional horticultural event in Scotland and would not be possible without the support of the Scottish horticultural industry. In 2023 the event was kindly supported by: **Lantra Scotland**, **Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh**, **The Scottish Government**:

SRUC; Growforth Limited; Keep Scotland Beautiful; Klondyke Garden Centres; The MacRobert Trust; Scotland's Garden Scheme; Scottish Gardeners' Forum; Scotland Grows Magazine; The Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society; National Trust for Scotland; The Professional Gardeners Guild; Trellis and BALI.

The Young Horticulturist of the Year competition is privileged to have the continued support of the **Shropshire Horticultural Society** and the **Percy Thrower Trust** as its main sponsor. There are also a large number of other regional sponsors that help to make the competition possible, these include: **Bord Bia, Glasnevin National Botanic Garden, Dundee Botanic Garden, Cherry Lane Garden Centres, Grimsthorpe Castle, Barcham Trees, Howard Nurseries, PlantNetwork, Bulldog Tools, Adrian Stockdale, North of England Horticultural Society, Stockbridge Technology Centre, Newby Hall, Provender Nurseries, The Outdoor Room, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, The Royal Horticultural Society, Pershore College, Wepre Park and Emmanuel College Cambridge.**

Collaboration for education

Our **Education Committee**, chaired by James Wagstaffe MCIHort have been developing the Institute's activities in relation to the various aspects of the horticulture education landscape: *Skills & Training, Levels 1-3, Higher Education & Green Careers* to gain a better understanding of the current strengths and weaknesses of the sector and how best to build on this and where the group's focus should be.

Institute members participated in Shipley College's Industry & Education Day. Delegates identified the future skills needed to help the sector adapt and grow before identifying the challenges the industry faces in recruiting new talent and how training providers and employers can work together to make horticulture a more attractive career.

Across our regions Institute members have been building strong links with horticulture colleges and institutions to encourage entrants to the profession.

Helen Sessions CHort MCIHort
Development Officer

To disseminate information on matters affecting the profession and provide opportunities for discussion amongst horticulturists

Supporting the next generation of horticulturists is an important mission for the Institute, to this end our early-career focussed e-newsletter **Growing Somewhere?** is published termly. With feature interviews and reports from industry specialists, new starters in the industry and those undertaking training and apprenticeships. Packed full of useful information with features on the grants and bursaries available, further study options and industry groups to inform and help shape careers of the future professionals in our industry.

Our **Early-career Horticulturists Working Group**, chaired by trustee Claire Mitchell ACIHort has led efforts to provide more opportunities for networking and peer-learning. The creation of our **LinkedIn Members Forum** has provided a valuable space for informal networking and knowledge sharing. In November our 'Spotlight on Bursaries' webinar was another great idea to come from the working group, showcasing the range of opportunities available to those starting or seeking to progress their careers.

Connecting with members digitally is essential for disseminating news, events and developments across all sectors of the industry. Our monthly electronic bulletin **e-horticulturist** brings current news and government initiatives, consultations and reports to the fore as well as sharing industry events and editorial on the current horticultural sphere. Important industry reports are now available from the Institute's website, making them accessible to a wider audience, as are a range of recordings of past events and guest lectures.

The Institute has an active presence on **social media**, including Instagram, X, Facebook and LinkedIn where we share a variety

of informative and inspirational content showcasing horticulture, horticultural careers and the Institute's activities.

The Horticulturist journal remains a keystone of Institute communications, edited by Barbara Segall CHort FCIHort, and distributed to all members in spring, summer and winter. Packed full of in-depth articles covering the wide and varied sectors that make up our industry. Our branches regularly contribute a regional round-up of events and activities.

We continue to develop new ways to bring groups of like-minded professionals together. **The Social and Therapeutic Horticulture Special Interest Group** is a new and vibrant group of social and therapeutic practitioners. The group meet regularly online and have held focussed events throughout the year, sharing insights from fellow practitioners, academics and allied professionals. The group is going from strength to strength and is becoming a destination for all fellow professionals across the UK and Ireland to meet, network and share best practice.

Our regional branch committees meet online to arrange visits and events, some also have informal networking events online, some produce newsletters or encourage interaction on branch social media accounts. In Ireland, members attended the Irish Plant Science Association Meeting 2023 at Queen's University Belfast where student members presented research posters; tremendous exposure for the students and a great opportunity to network and build awareness of the Institute.

Jason Daff CHort MCIHort
Honorary Secretary





Financial Report 2023

Total income was £166K. This is somewhat distorted by the fact that £11K was transferred from the South West Branch as the Branch is currently not functioning. Membership fees were £136K which was a net 9% increase on 2022. The other main areas of income were sponsorship from Shropshire Horticultural Society for the YHoY final of £10K, YHoY heats £1.3K, *The Horticulturist* £4.4K, merchandise £1.3K, AGM £0.7K and sponsorship of £0.75K.

Expenditure was £172.3K which was higher than budgeted in many areas arising from continuing inflation. The main items of expenditure were secretariat charges of £60.4K, (this inadvertently included a thirteenth payment in 2023) Development Officer £42.9K, *The Horticulturist* £22.7K, YHoY heats £4.6K, YHoY final £7.4K, accountants and insurance £5.6K, meetings £7.7K, IT and database £13.8K (including a maintenance fee of £6.8K), awards £1K and miscellaneous expenditure of £6.2K.

Excluding the transfer of funds from the South West Branch this would have given net income of £155K whilst on the expenditure side, excluding the thirteenth payment to BGA this would have given expenditure of £167K leaving a day-to-day deficit of £12K.

The value of our CCLA account increased by £6,713 in 2023 to £159,884 due to a significant increase in interest rates on deposits, whilst the value of our NFU investments increased by £7,499 to £127,132. With the strong performance in our investments gaining a total of £14,212, this offset our day-to-day deficit.

Our overall financial position at the end of 2023 showed a balance of £343.6K (including the transfer of £11K from the South West Branch). So, overall, our financial position is strong with very significant reserves.

The Management Board continues to closely monitor the financial position of the organisation and continue to develop plans to increase revenue whilst controlling expenditure and ensuring that it contributes to the capacity of the Institute to deliver an enhanced professional service for the membership. The full audited accounts for 2023 will be published on our website.

Membership fees were increased on average by 5% in 2023.

Charitable and Public Benefit

The Charity Commission requires all charities to make an annual statement as to the way their activities benefit the public. The Institute considers that the promotion of Chartered status provides both the horticultural industry and its members with added professional status as more members become 'Chartered Horticulturists'. The collaborative work of the Institute with key organisations ensures both the Institute and the industry has a voice on the wider stage. The Trustees are mindful of the Charity Commission Guidance on public benefit.

Reserves Policy

The Chartered Institute of Horticulture's policy concerning the level of cash and investments is to have funds available to: meet liabilities as they fall due; meet emergencies and build up investments over a period with the aim of providing an additional income stream to cover its activities. The Trustee's free reserves target, at a minimum, is to cover the full cost of operating the Institute for 3 months. The current level of free reserves held is significantly in excess of the Institute's Reserves Policy.

Risk Management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

Gabriel Roe FCIHort
Honorary Treasurer

Regional Branches

Our 8 regional branches operate autonomously with a local committee and representation on the CIH Council of Trustees. Branch Officers are elected at Annual Branch Meetings

Ireland

- Chair: Joseph Croke
- Vice-chair: Stephen Daye
- Secretary: Michael Hagan
- Treasurer: Paul Fitters
- YHoY Organiser: Sandra Austin

North West & North Wales

- Chair: Gareth Manning
- Secretary: Rob Mackey
- Treasurer: Susan Nicholas
- Membership Secretary: Helen Baxter
- Branch Correspondent: Richard Lewis

West Midlands & South Wales

- Chair: Kelly Baker
- Vice-chair: Josh Egan-Wyer
- Secretary: Lynn Stevens
- Treasurer: Josh Egan-Wyer

South West

- Chair: Vacant
- Treasurer: Vacant
- YHoY Organiser: Chris Bird

Scotland

- Interim Chair: Victoria George
- Vice-chair: George Gilchrist
- Membership Secretary: Fiona Sanderson
- Treasurer: Neil Woodcock
- Secretary: Vacant
- ECH Representative: James Douglass

Northern

- Chair: Clive Parker
- Vice-chair: Mike McQuade
- Secretary: Jason Daff
- Treasurer: Andrew Jackson
- Branch Correspondent: Mike Hirst
- YHoY Organiser: Cailean Stewart

Eastern

- Chair: Malcolm Catlin
- Vice-chair: Ted Smith
- Treasurer: Anja Schmalfuss
- Secretary: Fran Suckling
- ECH Representative: Amber Hine

South East

- Chair: Gerry Edwards
- Treasurer: Bernard Farrell
- YHoY Organiser: Michelle Brandon
- Events coordinator: Marie Shallcross
- ECH Representative: George Morris

Branch Updates

Scotland

The last year has been a difficult one for the Scottish Branch. We are still trying to regain the pre-covid member interest and engagement, and despite best efforts we are not progressing well with this at the moment. Due to my own workload, I officially stepped down as Chair at the AGM, however, with no one coming forward I am currently left 'holding the fort'!

It is not all doom and gloom though, we have had some new members join the committee, James and Gallia have both come through YHoY, both keen and committed to getting involved, there has been new industry contacts made, and we held a VERY successful Grow Careers Day, for which huge thanks must go to George Gilchrist for organising again. I look forward to these positive areas pushing the Scottish Branch forward in 2024.

**Victoria George MCIHort,
Interim Branch Chair**

Northern

In 2023 the Northern Branch arranged several outstanding visits and events. Kicking-off in February with a most excellent visit to Tudor Croft, Guisborough to view Mike Heagney's impressive collection of Galanthus. The Regional final of the YHoY competition was held at Newby Hall, particular thanks to Nick Smith (HFS Show Director) and the Compton family for their continued support and congratulations to all our participants.

We enjoyed visits to Shipley College, Saltaire and also to the restored gardens at Lowther Castle, Cumbria, where Head Gardener Andrea Brunsendorf gave an excellent tour. A particular highlight for me was our day of visits in the Humber region, where we visited HMP Hull, very different from our usual visits! Nonetheless the high standards of horticulture inside the prison were evident and it was interesting to hear the challenges faced by the staff and inmates. We then proceeded to Premier Plant Producers for a marvellous visit led by Will Overvoorde who gave fascinating insight into mass production of trees and the changing dynamic of productive nursery from vegetables to trees.

Our Annual Branch Meeting was held at the wonderful Crook Hall Gardens, Durham where we elected a new committee for the coming year. I would like to thank all of the branch committee and our members for their continued support.

Clive Parker CHort FCIHort (Rtd), Branch Chair

Eastern

The Eastern Branch has managed to maintain an active committee and is successfully organising visits following a couple of years of mostly virtual meetings. Attendance at these visits is satisfactory and more are planned for 2024, the first (in January) being fully-subscribed.

We are seeking to extend the reach across as many sectors of the profession as possible and also to support the national programme of online speakers on topics of current interest.

Malcolm Catlin MCIHort, Branch Chair

South East

The South East Branch has now finished its rebuild and now has an active and committed Committee. The Committee is comprised of members from various sectors of the horticultural industry and we are particularly delighted to have an early-career horticulturist representative.

Gerry Edwards CHort MCIHort, Branch Chair

North West & North Wales

Overall, 2023 has proved to be a challenging year for the branch with planned visits having to be cancelled due to external factors beyond our control and attendance at the Southport flower show being cancelled due to lack of volunteers. Personal commitments external to CIH have taken precedence for a number of committee members towards the end of the year and as such the branch activities somewhat faltered following the summer. This has now been addressed and a full diary of activities are being planned for 2024.

Gareth Manning FCIHort, Branch Chair

West Midlands & South Wales

We had a busy year visiting many parks and gardens, a mushroom grower, a cut flower nursery and more. One of the things I love about horticulture is how it covers such a wide field and we did our best to get a taste of as many disciplines as possible! Highlights for me were visiting Birmingham Botanic gardens where I started as a horticultural apprentice 23 years ago! It was wonderful to see the *Albizia julibrissin*, which I remember as a very small tree planted outside the Pavillion Tea rooms. It's now, of course, fully mature and shading several outdoor tables and chairs and smothered in flowers. A real treat! I want to say a particular thank you to Lynn Stevens, our previous Secretary for the West Midlands and South Wales Branch for her long service and dedication to both helping to organise events but also membership and supporting as our council representative. Lynn is moving away from the area so she can spend more time with her grandchildren and we wish her all the happiness in her new home. I would also like to thank our committee members Josh Egan-Wyer, Paul Mann and Felicity Weeks for their excellent support. Thank you for helping to organise and run our regional YHOY, attend and support council meetings and organise events for our members. I would like to welcome and thank David Butt and Laura Ashton-Phillips who have put themselves forward to help support our committee.

I hope to see as many of our members as possible at this year's visits. This year we are visiting Gloucestershire Royal NHS Gardens, Highnam Court Gardens, Bute Park and nursery, Greenjams nurseries and The Picton Gardens.

Kelly Baker MCIHort, Branch Chair

Ireland

Numerous successful events in the Ireland branch region were undertaken during 2023. Social and therapeutic horticulture was a strong theme in 2023 and future joint events focusing on this area are planned for 2024 with joint membership of the Institute and social and therapeutic horticulture organisations hoped to copper-fasten future relationships.

The Ireland branch study tour went to a new region of Ireland with the hope of exposing that region's horticultural community to the Chartered Institute of Horticulture. This worked brilliantly and up to 100 horticulturists in the low density population region were made aware of our visit with many coming to meet us. It is vital that we expand exposure to as many in the industry as possible and increase sustainable membership. The theme of the annual study tour was on sustainability and members visited a retired peat burning and peat harvesting site; part of our industry's story and historical journey. The facility and peatland has since been repurposed to generate electricity by wind power.

Joseph Croke CHort MCIHort, Branch Chair

South West

The South West Branch is currently dormant. Members are encouraged to volunteer for committee roles to revive the important work in the region. Please contact the secretariat for further information on volunteering opportunities.



Organisation & Governance

Council, as the governing body and trustees of the Institute as a registered charity, is responsible for all policy decisions and actions taken by the Institute. This work is governed by the Institute's Royal Charter, its associated Bye-laws and such policies as are deemed necessary.

Council meets at least twice a year (in 2023 Council met three times: in February, June and November) in order to agree and monitor progress on the Institute's strategic objectives.

The day-to-day management of the CIH is undertaken by the Management Board. Invitations are circulated to members to nominate corporate members to be elected to the Council of Trustees and voted on by members at the next Annual General Meeting. Consideration is made to any skills gaps present within the Council when recruiting new trustees. Trustees receive training on their legal obligations and those of the Charter and Bye-laws through use of a Trustee handbook and Charity Commission guidelines.

Council of Trustees

President: David Richardson CHort FCIHort

President Elect: Richard Barley CHort MCIHort

Honorary Treasurer: Gabriel Roe FCIHort

Honorary Secretary: Jason Daff CHort MCIHort

Immediate Past President:

Susan Nicholas FCIHort

Edible Sector Representative:

James Simpson

Education Representative:

James Wagstaffe MCIHort

South West: Vacant

South East: Andrew Cotterill CHort MCIHort

Eastern: John Cappalonga MCIHort

West Midlands & South Wales:

Paul Mann MCIHort

North West & North Wales:

Gareth Manning FCIHort

Northern: Jason Daff CHort MCIHort

Scotland: George Gilchrist FCIHort

Ireland: Joseph Croke CHort MCIHort

Co-opted Members:

Early-Career Horticulturist Representative:

Claire Mitchell ACIHort

Social & Therapeutic Horticulture Rep.

Sue Jeffries MCIHort

Protected Edibles Representative

Phil Pearson FCIHort

Trustees Elected in 2023

Jason Daff CHort MCIHort, Honorary Secretary

Jason is the Horticulture Technical Manager at the University of York. He is responsible for ensuring that the University's plant and crop science research portfolio is supported by sound horticultural practices. Jason holds a degree in horticulture, specialising in crop production from Pershore College and the University of Worcester. He has previously worked for global seed and crop-protection company Syngenta and the Sainsbury Laboratory at the University of Cambridge, where he oversaw the extensive controlled environment growing facilities. He is Vice-Chair of the UK Controlled Environment Users' Group: a collaborative network of academics and CE practitioners who advocate for best practice and knowledge sharing on the use of CE facilities in research and industry. In 2023 Jason was named *The Times'* Higher Education Outstanding Technician of the Year.



Andrew Cotterill CHort MCIHort, South East Branch Representative

Andrew pursued a career in horticulture following in the steps of his grandfather. Firstly studying at Warwickshire College for the BTEC National Diploma in amenity horticulture. He then went on to gain the Royal Horticultural Society's Master of Horticulture (MHort) having studied at Hadlow College and RHS Garden Wisley. Andrew originally joined the Institute as a student member becoming a full member in 2012 and then going on to become a Chartered Horticulturist in 2016. Having now accumulated 34 years of experience within the industry at management and supervisory levels, mostly within the environmental horticulture sector he has also spent some time working on nurseries and in garden centres. His passion is working on historic parks and gardens, seeking to preserve our rich garden heritage and has been fortunate enough to manage some really special sites such as the Benenden School estate, Tonbridge School and National Trust gardens including Sissinghurst.



John Cappalonga MCIHort, Eastern Branch Representative

John has been involved in commercial horticulture all his life. Initially, working in his parents' chrysanthemum nursery, where he learned about artificial blooming techniques using lighting and shade. As demand shifted, the nursery transitioned into hydroponic sweet-pepper cultivation. John took over the business upon his parents' retirement, focussing on expanding greenhouse operations and modernising methods to stay current with modern industry trends and innovation. John has participated in various industry boards and committees, including the NFU's Horticulture Board, the AHDB's Protected Edible Panel and the new Agriculture T-Level steering group. Recently, John completed a BSc in horticulture and has since sold the pepper growing enterprise. He now utilises his experience and skill set in India, working with a British start-up company which aims to empower and educate underprivileged farmers to optimise yields and minimise environmental impact.



James Wagstaffe MCIHort, Education Representative

As a horticulturist and an applied plant physiologist James is currently an Associate Professor at the Lincoln Institute for Agri-Food Technology, where he is the Director of Teaching and Learning. Prior to joining the University of Lincoln, he worked for Cornwall College at the Eden Project, where he was a Curriculum Area Manager and Lecturer for the higher education programmes in horticulture, plant science, garden and landscape design and land and ecological restoration. Previously he worked for the Eden Project as Nursery Manager and spent many years working and studying at the University of Reading. Having studied and worked in the land-based colleges and university sectors throughout his career, he has a strong empathy for horticultural education at all levels, recognising the huge value and impact of horticultural jobs on society and the environment and has a drive to continue to promote careers in an exciting, innovative, diverse and rewarding industry.



George Gilchrist FCIHort, Scotland Branch Representative

George began his horticultural career with The National Trust for Scotland as a youth trainee at Greenbank Garden before progressing onto the Threave School of Horticulture. He was fortunate in the early part of his career to work and study at some of the world's great gardens including the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Longwood Gardens, Gothenburg Botanic Garden, Inverewe and Crathes Castle.

He has never been far away from horticultural education and has spent the majority of his career lecturing at Scotland's Rural College. George has been influential in developing the annual Grow Careers Scotland Day that now attracts 250 young horticulturists to attend a day of lectures and networking with the industry. In 2023 George was awarded the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society's 'Dr Andrew Duncan Medal' for distinguished service to horticulture by an educationalist.



Chartered Institute of 
Horticulture

Bankers

HSBC Bank Plc

Independent Financial Examiner

Helen Furlong FCCA
McLintocks (NW) Limited
Wirral, Merseyside

Secretariat

British Growers Association
Secretariat Manager: Rachel Kemp

Chartered Institute of Horticulture

**BGA House
Nottingham Road
Louth
Lincolnshire
LN11 0WB**

☎ 03330 050181

✉ cih@horticulture.org.uk
🌐 www.horticulture.org.uk

