

# RIVERMEAD COURT

## NEWSLETTER



## SPRING 2019

### CONTENTS

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER	3	PIPEWORK FUTURE	3	LEASE EXTENSION	5
BROADBAND	6	GARDEN	7	LIGHTING	8
STAFF SPOTLIGHT	9	LOCAL EVENTS	12	STAFF LIST	14

## **Contributions to the Newsletter**

We would welcome contributions to the Newsletter and in particular any good photographs for the front cover. Please send to Fiona Fowler, flat 69, [fionafowler31@gmail.com](mailto:fionafowler31@gmail.com).

## From the Chairman

Most of what the Board has been occupied with in recent months is described fully in separate articles in this Newsletter. There's little more to add except to say that if progress on some subjects such as the lease extension or the pipework project may seem somewhat slow to some residents, it isn't due to lack of commitment on the Board's part. Rather that work on these projects is a bit like peeling an onion as each layer reveals something more or something unexpected. Fortunately, so far there are no tears. However, silence shouldn't be interpreted as stasis and, as in this Newsletter, we will communicate with you whenever the Board has any significant developments to report. To ensure that the forward movement on the pipework and lease extension projects is maintained - and if possible accelerated - and that they are synchronised since they are inter-linked in many respects, the Board is in the process of appointing a part-time and experienced project co-ordinator.

On behalf of the Board, may I wish you a Happy Easter and a pleasant start to the Spring.

Tom Hackett

### **Date for the Diary**

#### **The Rivermead Court AGM**

will be held on Monday 3 June 2019 at 7 pm

in the Hurlingham Club

## Rivermead Court Future Pipework

The January consultation paper on the proposals for our pipework invited comments and questions. If you have not commented and want to, there is still time. Copies of the paper, including how to comment, are available from Anne Isaacs or on the website.

This is a short summary of the main points:

- The existing pipework is well beyond its design life and extensive technical investigations have found it to be in disrepair. The current system cannot practically be replaced 'as is'. Ongoing maintenance is increasingly expensive and we are also at risk from another Legionella infection.

- The proposed new system, based on HIUs at the back door of each flat - centrally-powered from the existing boilerhouse - is in line with current best practice for residential blocks such as ours. Each flat will have its own new supply of:
  - Potable cold water;
  - Hot water (at mains pressure and a temperature you can set); and
  - Hot water for central heating that you can control.
- The overall cost of the replacement infrastructure is likely to be of the order of £3m. This will be funded by RCL, including the cost of HIUs. The funds will come from the premiums we pay on lease extensions, as has been explained in separate communications.
- The cost of internal works to each flat to make the connections between the HIU and radiators or underfloor heating and outlets in bathrooms and kitchens will be the responsibility of the leaseholder.
- It is clear that the pipework changes within flats will be disruptive, which is why our whole proposal is based on the concept of a long transition period, when both old and new systems will run in parallel. The transition period will run to 31 March 2034, 15 years. In the vast majority of cases, this will enable the pipework changes to be undertaken alongside other refurbishments. The decision when, within the 15 years, to make the transition will be yours. The works will be subject to our usual 'Alteration Licence' arrangements and advice and guidance will be available.
- For the last few years, we have asked that refurbishments include 'future-proof' pipework. In other words that the internal pipework systems are re-laid and upgraded to be 'HIU ready'. Some 16 flats have been future-proofed but remain connected directly to the 'old' system and a further 11 flats have already installed HIUs. More are converting as I write.
- Lease changes. Even though RCL proposes to fund all the capital costs of the infrastructure, advice from Leading Counsel is that two aspects of our current leases require change:
  - Charging for heat used (although it is now a legal requirement for new systems to operate in this way).
  - Disconnection. We need to write into all leases appropriate transitional provisions for the time when both systems are running and provisions to allow RCL to disconnect the Old System when the time comes.
- Once the new system is connected to your flat, you will have a supply of cold water that will be consistently cold (a bug-bear of many); hot water at a temperature you control and at mains pressure; underfloor heating, if you wish, or any number of radiators; individual room temperature control; no Legionella risk; and a heating charge based on what you use. The new system will be fit for the future.

### **The next steps**

Aside from questions related to individual flats, all the responses to date have supported the plans. The Board has appointed solicitors Bishop & Sewell to undertake the legal work on our leases. Leaseholders will be kept informed as this work progresses. The next big action will be a formal consultation with leaseholders, which will include proposed lease changes and will take

the form of a ballot to enable us to seek the approval of the First Tier Tribunal. This ballot will need approval from at least 75% of leaseholders and objections from fewer than 10%.

An example of an HIU is available to see outside the Estate Manager's office in the basement of the Centre block

*Tim Soane*



## Lease Extension

Since the last Newsletter, a significant amount of background activity has been going on in order to make progress with our commitment to offer voluntary long lease extensions to all leaseholders in accordance with the proposals made at the last AGM.

We conducted a survey of leaseholders to get an idea of the level of support we might expect to our proposals and the overwhelming majority of those responding expressed interest in extending their leases. Indeed, there appears to be a considerable appetite among leaseholders for longer leases.

We have consulted both with Counsel and our auditors to advise on the taxation implications of extending the leases. While the answer was not clear-cut we expect the bulk of the company's expenditure on the pipework to be allowable against profits. As our auditors have pointed out, past expenses have been set against company profits and we expect this to continue while accepting there is a small risk the company may have some tax to pay. There is no risk free way around this and the clear advice is that all other options as to how we might proceed will give a worse result than what is now being proposed.

Meanwhile, legal advisers have been appointed to take us through the parallel workstreams of lease extensions and the heating project. We are advised that we should not attempt any lease changes until all the documentation has been submitted to the First Tier Tribunal. The Tribunal will not entertain considering documents that are in the process of being changed and given the pace of legal deliberations we do not want to jeopardise the timings by not having all the leases in good order.

That said, there is nothing to stop us from being ready to make the offer to residents as soon as possible after the Tribunal has the papers. The timing of this remains to be clarified. Our legal advisers will draft the necessary lease changes to enable the Heating Project to proceed, and a ballot of all leaseholders will then be necessary in order to submit the proposed changes to the Tribunal. As mentioned in previous communications with leaseholders, 75% of leaseholders must approve the changes, with not more than 10% dissenting. It is therefore important that all leaseholders respond to the ballot in a timely fashion.

As reported in the last newsletter, we have identified a surveyor who will be able to carry out the valuations and, depending on the speed of the heating project ballot, we hope to be able to instruct him in the next 12 to 18 months.

*Carol Ferguson*

## Broadband

At the October 2018 Board meeting the decision was made in principle to install a fibre optic broadband network at Rivermead Court. A small group was set up to consider the various contenders and Callum Knowles of Regional Network Solutions (<http://rnetso.net>) was engaged as an industry expert to help in the process and to support the committee by advising on relevant industry practices.

The group recommended Community Fibre (CF) should be appointed and this has been accepted by the Board. Community Fibre will fund the entire cost of the infrastructure; Rivermead Court Limited will not contribute although it will take up the service for its own needs.

The reasons CF was chosen include:

- CF is a large, well capitalised company with an excellent reputation in the industry;
- They would provide full fibre right to the threshold of the flat (the rear entrance);
- Their service team is available 24/7/365 and is contactable via freephone, email or their website;
- They are ranked by Trustpilot as the UK's best internet service provider ("ISP") with a score of 9.7;
- They have a reputation for engaging well with their user communities.

In the case of Rivermead Court, they have offered to work closely with RCL to explain their offerings to residents. They say they would be happy to: (a) Establish a drop-in centre where information about the system will be available for tenants; (b) make a presentation at the AGM or arrange other meetings or working groups to help educate those who may be less familiar with broadband services.

CF is a full service provider insofar as it will not only install and maintain the fibre optic backbone but it will also contract with RMC residents as ISP for the provision of broadband services. In other words, it will provide both the medium through which the signals are transmitted and will also connect the users via broadband to the internet. It will install the fibre optic network under a wayleave agreement with RCL, but will contract with flat owners separately to deliver broadband services to them.

Every flat will have access to the new network. CF will offer a range of connection speeds available from 40 Mbps (£20 a month) to 1,000 Mbps (£50 a month). In most cases, it will be possible to transfer your email address and telephone number to the new service.

There will, of course, be no requirement for residents to use CF as their service provider and they can continue with their present company if they so wish. The existing BT Openreach service will be unaffected.

It is early stages but it is hoped that the system might be installed over the course of the summer by 1 September. Full information will be sent to residents nearer the time.

A copy of Community Fibre's proposal is on the Rivermead Court web site.



## The Summer Party

will be held on Monday 8 July from 6.30 pm  
on the lawn in front of the east block

Bring your own drinks, food and chairs and encourage your neighbours to  
come!

### From the Garden Committee

The small bed against the railings that divided the garden from Hurlingham Court has been abolished and the plants from it used in other parts of the garden. The area will be turfed over when the weather is right.

Sadly the annual invasion by box caterpillars has already begun. Some box hedges will have to be replaced by euonymus while others may be appropriately managed

Discussions continue on the changes to the Secret Garden. A very attractive design has been created by Cally Baxter, the garden designer, and is currently being costed. This would provide a new entrance in the north wall of the garden and then various slopes to the river level. The advantage is that it avoids any steps and so would enable access to the river walk for wheelchairs users. Under one option, the potting shed would be demolished and an open sheltered structure with pillars and a shingle roof would be built in its place to provide shade for those who like it. This illustration gives some idea of the sort of thing being considered - but it would be open, of course.



One small plea from the Garden Committee: Please do not distract the gardeners while they are working. Everyone is very happy to receive criticism – though preferably praise - but please pass it to the Garden Committee.

## Emergency Lighting

### Background

Legislation requires Rivermead Court to provide effective emergency lighting in the case of a fire or total power outage. This means that all the common parts of the building have to be fitted with emergency lights so that in the event of a power failure and the need to evacuate the building, there will be enough light to guide you out of the premises.

It was considered impractical to “add” this lighting system to what was already there as it would require additional wiring throughout the three blocks, with the resultant mess, inconvenience and not inconsiderable cost. It would also look very unattractive, with lights appearing side by side. It was therefore decided to use the existing wiring and replace the lights.

It was also decided that all common parts should be lit with LEDs (light-emitting diodes), as opposed to conventional bulbs as they have a much longer life and use less than half the electricity of a conventional bulb, giving a considerable saving on both consumption and replacements.

### The new lights

**Round ceiling lights.** The ceiling lights on all corridors in the east and west blocks have been replaced with identical lights, designed to an emergency specification. Initially these lights were fitted with a “daylight” effect but these were too bright and have now been changed to a more acceptable “warmer” light. Some residents may still feel that this is not “warm enough” but it is the best level of lighting that can be achieved using LEDs and still comply with the legal level of lighting required in an emergency.

Initially, to save electricity, the lights were ordered with sensors that operated only at full power when there was movement. This proved to be a mistake! The movement sensors have been removed except on the staircases behind the passenger lifts.

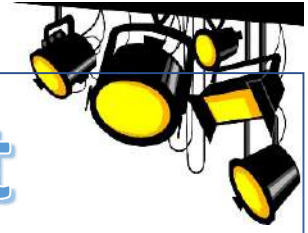
The original **wall lights** at corridor-ends (in blocks 1-33, 67-98, 115-146 and 180-211, excluding ground floors) may have to be renewed or adapted as we have a legal obligation to provide emergency lighting to a specified lux level. The initial advice we have had is that the residual light from the nearby ceiling lights, when in emergency mode, does not provide adequate light outside the flats to meet the regulations.

We are currently awaiting further advice in this regard from a lighting consultant with expertise in both safety standards and lighting quality to see if it is absolutely necessary to change these wall lights. If we do have to change them, then we have asked the lighting consultant to propose some appropriate designs for review. The initial sample wall lights that we have fitted on the first floor of block 180-211 are more in keeping with the 1930s period, but we want to review other options before finally deciding on the replacement, if that should prove necessary.

**Ground floors.** In view of concerns on the original proposals expressed by residents regarding the lighting on the ground floors in all entrances and on each floor of the Centre block, the Board has requested the consultant to review these too. This process is taking longer than initially expected but it is hoped that the results will satisfy both residents and legal requirements without creating unwarranted additional cost.



# Staff Spotlight



## Anne Isaacs

### Job Title – Estate Manager

When I was at school and asked what I wanted to do for a career, I said I wanted to be a nurse. It would be interesting to know how many of the kids who were sent on work experience stayed in that chosen career. I certainly did not. I was sent to a Convent Hospital run by Nuns and I quickly found out that I had too much compassion: patients alone in their rooms needed someone to talk to, which in hindsight probably contributes to a speedy recovery, but no, I was ordered by the Nuns to do some really not such nice jobs.

On my return to school I changed track and learned to type and use the computer. Back then we had the BBC computer with one 5" inch floppy to save, one to print etc.....those were the days.

I secured a job at the East Midlands Conference Centre in the University of Nottingham spending 6 years as the Conference Secretary in which time the urge for further education got to me. My boss agreed that I do a Diploma in Business and Finance, which I passed with a distinction. I wanted to progress within the Conference Office, but we had a great team which meant no-one left so the prospect of promotion was nil.

A job came up in one of the Halls of Residence and I put my hat in the ring, was interviewed by a panel of 6 including Hall Wardens and was successful. My first Hall of 303 undergrad students was a challenge but I soon found I felt comfortable and happy helping people and getting the job done. I spent over 20 years managing student halls, first for the University of Nottingham, then London South Bank University and finally for Imperial College London.

Now I am here at Rivermead Court. I have to pinch myself as whilst there is a lot to do, I really do enjoy my job and love being here. I have met some but not all of you, but there is still time.

With regards to hobbies I love reading and riding my bike though I need to make more time for both. I have two fish tanks in the house and a fish pond outside. I want a tropical fish tank, but I think I would get the look from my husband. That may be one fish tank too far....

I only have one son, Junior – well not so junior now! Standing tall above me (pictured right).

I volunteer for the London Metropolitan Branch of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH): I am the Branch Chair, a member of Council and have recently been elected as a Trustee for the Benevolent Fund. I am really excited about this as we give money donated by the members to members in need. If we can each just help one person – what a difference that makes to their day or their life. That's why I do and love the job I do.



## Notes from the Estate Manager

There are now two boxes for recycling batteries, one opposite the Estate Manager's office in the basement of the Centre Block and one outside store 1 in the West Block basement (Ranelagh Gardens end).

The next stage of external painting is the east facing facade facing the Hurlingham Club. Work will probably start about the end of April.

Would residents please remind their contractors that Rivermead Court is a no smoking area. Please would they not smoke in the building or in the grounds.

Gas certificates. A reminder that all landlords (or their agents) should provide the Estate Manager with a copy of the gas certificate issued for their flat.

Beckford and their electrical contractor have been on site recently to make some adjustments to the new emergency lights on the main roof of the east and west blocks, which you can see from the enclosed lightwells. A few of these lights were operating and remaining on at night. This should be resolved shortly.

The external perimeter building lights have been changed by Steve Sims to day/night sensor activation, rather than having to be switched on manually each day by the porters.

Earlier this year, Jozsef Kozma, one of the night staff, who had been with Rivermead Court for over 6 years, resigned to join his family in Thailand. His replacement will be appointed shortly.

If you wish to see me to discuss an issue, I try to be in my office between 2 and 3.30pm Monday to Friday. Alternatively, you can email me at [info@rivermeadcourt.co.uk](mailto:info@rivermeadcourt.co.uk).

*Anne Isaacs*

## Flushing taps – hot and cold

Once again, many thanks to those of you who have been flushing regularly and asking the porters to do it when you are away. We continue to find unacceptably high readings where flushing has not taken place, so please remain vigilant.



A new development is that we have been finding high bacterial readings in some cold taps. We cannot identify the strain but it is not Legionella in this case. We are taking steps with the tanks to improve the water quality at source but it is a reminder that we should be flushing both hot and cold taps for 2 minutes every week, especially rarely used outlets and flexible showers.

## Parking

Visitor parking hours changed in January. Visitors may now park inside Rivermead Court as long as there is space between 11am and 6pm.

Please would those with garages remember to use their garage and not park in the general area as the area is becoming crowded again with cars that are not entitled to be there.

## Bridge News

The annual friendly rubber bridge match between Rivermead Court and Hurlingham took place on Thursday 28 March. We fielded 15 pairs.

We may not have had the cards in the match, that was won by Hurlingham; but there were two silver linings. Assuredly we did have the most wonderful team in the room: full of companionship and community; and our top scoring pair, Michael and Susanna Young, achieved the overall best score (and the champagne) so very well done to them.

Some of our team couldn't be with us this year but I know we were in their thoughts. Many, many thanks to all who did play - returning stalwarts; those who stepped in as players with a few days to go; those who travelled half way round the world to be back for the match; and to my reserve in the background for being ready on the day to cover for an emergency.

For 2020 Gavin and Angela Trechman are our new Rivermead convenors. They will look after us with kindness and care. They are bringing in a new format next year. Rather than rubber bridge, we shall be playing Chicago Bridge. The great advantages of playing Chicago Bridge are that there is more chance of us all swapping over to play with different people, and we should all finish at a similar time. They will tell us more nearer the time.

Finally, Monica Davis (Chairman of Hurlingham Bridge) is very keen for us all to feel part of the Club bridge community. There is a Chicago Bridge dinner on 23 April, 6.45. We can buy tickets online or ring Club Reception. Every member can purchase at least 4 guest tickets. There is also a "Kitchen Bridge" event in May to watch out for. And we are all warmly invited.

*Giorgina Stone*

## ULEZ

The Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) comes into force on 8 April 2019, and will initially cover the existing congestion charge zone in central London but, unlike the congestion zone, it will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. From 25 October 2021, it will expand to an area bounded by the north and south circular roads. This is therefore a critical date for Fulham car owners.

Vehicles, including motorbikes, that don't meet the tighter exhaust emissions standards will have to pay £12.50 every day that they are used within the ULEZ – the city centre zone from this April, the extended one from October 2021 – in addition to the existing congestion charge. Failure to pay will result in a fine of £160. Lorries will be charged £100 a day.

Broadly speaking, pre-2015 diesels and pre-2006 petrol cars will fall foul of the new standards. To find out if your car or bike is affected, go to the "Check your vehicle" page on the TfL website: <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone/vrm-checker-ulez>

Keepers of vehicles registered with a "disabled" or "disabled passenger vehicles" tax class will not have to pay until 26 October 2025.

## Thank you

We thank Vanessa Lowndes for very kindly providing this year's exceptionally impressive Christmas tree.

*(photograph: Franey Irani)*



Thank you to all the residents who contributed to the staff Christmas collection. A record £30k approx. was contributed by residents of which staff received 80% as Rivermead Court to protect its staff, and possibly unlike other organisations, ensures that HMRC gets its due.

## Car keys

Three vehicles have recently been stolen from Palace ward. Two of these vehicles were stolen by means of a keyless theft. The police advise that if your vehicle has a keyless system, it is recommended to store your car keys in a 'faraday bag'. These anti-theft signal blocking pouch bags can help prevent criminals cloning the key.



Here are some suggestions that residents have made and which could be implemented if there was general enthusiasm.

**Books.** One idea is that books you have read could be placed on a communal shelf, perhaps opposite the Estate Manager's office for other residents to borrow and read. This would **not** be a place for your old Latin primer or law books but for those novels or biographies that you have read and have no space for on your bookshelf.

**Shredder service.** A resident discovered that to use a shredding company they had to buy 10 bags for £70 (+VAT) when they only needed one. The bags hold 15kgs and we wondered if there would be any demand from other residents. Perhaps 10 people might like a bag each and we could order a pack once a year. The company would then come to Rivermead Court and shred on site.

## Local events

### The Prudential Cycle Ride

Prudential Cycle will be held on 3 and 4 August. The main event is on the Sunday when professional cyclists race the 100 mile route through London and Surrey. The race passes through Fulham and there will be a lot of road closures around the Kings Road and Putney Bridge. The policing is taken very seriously and it can be very difficult to get around.

On the Saturday, there is a shorter and more informal ride for all the family through central London that should not affect Fulham. <https://www.prudentialridelondon.co.uk>

### **Polo in the Park, 7-9 June**



There will be a ballot for free tickets to the polo in Hurlingham Park for those living nearby. Ballot Draw A is for those who live in identified streets (includes Ranelagh Gardens) near the park and 800 tickets are allocated. Any unsuccessful applicants from these streets will be entered into Ballot Draw B for the 960 free tickets available to all Hammersmith & Fulham residents with borough postcodes. Details of the residents draw are not yet available but for other tickets, see: <https://www.polointheparklondon.com>.

### **ArtsFest 2019**

The Hammersmith & Fulham ArtsFest runs from 1 to 9 June. It is an inclusive, open arts event for all, with over 100 Arts Partners and 200 events from performing arts to literature, visual arts to film. Performances and events are programmed across multiple venues in all corners of the borough of Hammersmith & Fulham with free admission for most of the activities.

Details at: <http://www.hf-artsfest.com/>

### **The Society of Fulham Artists & Potters**

The society has two selling exhibitions a year of work by member artists (2D and 3D) at the Fulham Library, 598 Fulham Road, SW6 5NX for six days. The next exhibitions will be 14 – 19 May.

<https://www.sofap.co.uk/>

### **Fulham Palace Photographic Competition**

Fulham Palace is organising a photography competition, *Picture the Palace*. You have until midnight on Sunday 21 April to submit your photo.

Details at: <http://www.fulhampalace.org/palacephoto/>

### **Music by the Bridge at All Saints Church. Putney Bridge**

Performances 7.15 - 8.00pm. Everyone welcome. Doors and bar open at 6.45pm wine and soft drinks available. Free entry.

<https://www.allsaints-fulham.org.uk/2019musicbythebridgesession.htm>

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| May 17th  | A Night at the Movies;  |
| June 7th  | Loving and Dying – the Lives and Loves of Monteverdi and Gesualdo;  |
| July 5th  | Summer Soiree - A potpourri of party pieces, played with precision and panache by St. Paul's Girls' School; |
| Sept 20th | Fantasy and Folksong for all the Family.  |

### **Parsons Green Fair, 6 July**

The Parsons Green Fair is on Saturday 6 July on Parsons Green. This is an enjoyable event with some interesting stalls and children's entertainments.

### **Rowing**

See a full list at: <http://www.pla.co.uk/Events/Annual-Events-Calendar>

Some races that may be seen from Rivermead Court:

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 7 April      | University Boat Race                              |
| 19-21 April  | Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race                 |
| 18 May       | APP Sup (stand up paddle) World Championship Race |
| 15 June      | Outrigger Canoe race                              |
| 14 September | Great River Race                                  |



## Football 'At Home' matches

**Fulham** play Everton 13 April, 3 pm; Cardiff City 27 April, 3 pm; Newcastle 12 May, 3 pm.

<https://www.google.com/search?q=fulham+fc+fixtures&oq=fulham+FC&aqs=chrome.1.0l6.5978j0j9&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>



**Chelsea** play Brighton 3 April 7.45pm; West Ham United 8 April, 8pm; Slavia Prague 18 April, 8pm; Burnley 22 April, 3pm; Watford 4 May, 3pm.

<https://www.google.com/search?q=chelsea+fc+fixtures&oq=chelsea+Fc+fixtures&aqs=chrome.0.69i59j69i60j0l4.5230j0j9&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

## Contact details

If you have a problem and need to contact someone, please first contact the Porters Lodge on 020 7736 3993. The Estate Manager, Anne Isaacs, can be contacted on tel 07852 518 345 or at email [info@rivermeadcourt.co.uk](mailto:info@rivermeadcourt.co.uk).

If you wish to contact a board member, please leave a note at the Porters Lodge.

Board of Directors	Staff Complement
<p><b>Thomas Hackett</b> (Chairman) <b>Carol Ferguson</b> (Finance) <b>Fiona Fowler</b> (Company Secretary; House Committee; Communications) <b>Peter Green</b> (Estates Committee; Pipework Committee) <b>Tim Halford</b> (Estates Committee; Basements) <b>Deborah Richards</b> (House Committee; Health and Safety) <b>Tim Soane</b> (Pipework Committee) <b>Michael Stevens</b> (Pipework Committee) <b>Bernard Weatherill</b> (Legal)</p>	<p><b>Estate Manager</b> – Anne Isaacs <b>Deputy House Managers</b> – Berhane Dejenie Terry Fowler <b>Porters</b> – Keith Moody, Nicholas Odei, Rony Pereira, Abel Abebe, Dylan Fowler <b>Cleaners</b> – Jaime Villapa, Malinda Fowler, Roy Moody, Robert Baxter <b>Contract Gardener</b> – James Sheen Ltd</p>

