

Tiffany & Co. Foundation and Royal Parks Foundation bring Italian flair to Kensington Gardens

The Italian Gardens in London's Royal Parks have been restored to recapture the glory of the 1860s when the Gardens were first created as a gift from Prince Albert to his beloved Queen Victoria.

The 150-year-old Grade II listed ornamental water gardens, near Lancaster Gate on the North side of Kensington Gardens, have undergone significant restoration work including repairing severe frost damage, clearing the silted-up fountain basins and ancient pipework, installing new pumps and removing a build-up of green algae from the Portland stone and marble. The works together cost £486,000 (\$778,970.99), and have conserved these beautiful gardens for future generations of Londoners and visitors to enjoy.

The restoration is the final element of a campaign called *Tiffany - Across the Water* made possible by a \$1.25 million grant (£784,000) from the Tiffany & Co. Foundation to the Royal Parks Foundation (USA), a charity established to enable Americans to support the natural history and heritage of London's Royal Parks. *Tiffany - Across the Water* focuses on restoring ornamental and drinking fountains across the 5,000 acres of the eight Royal Parks. The funding has also enabled an international competition with The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) to design London's newest, most robust and beautiful drinking fountains - as well as the re-creation of a stunning twenty-foot water plume in St James's Park lake.

Speaking about the completed restoration work, Sara Lom, Chief Executive of the Royal Parks Foundation, said: "The Gardens provide a beautiful corner of Renaissance Italy in London and will bring renewed joy to millions of visitors every year. *Tiffany - Across the Water* has not only conserved the Royal Parks' wonderful heritage, it has also spread romance through our capital city. That is an amazing gift."

The challenging restoration work at The Italian Gardens involved painstaking stone carving, cleaning and restoring the famous Tazza Fountain overlooking the Long Water, renovating the benches, and installing a new, cleaner, water system, topped up by a borehole. The Royal Parks ecology and landscape architecture teams have also designed a display of aquatic plants, anchored in the four perimeter basins, reflecting how the Gardens might originally have appeared.

The intricate stonemasonry included carving eight life-sized swan heads and necks, as replacement handles on some of the urns. The Tazza fountain, made from a mix of Portland stone and white marble, had suffered significant deterioration and required a great deal of fine carving on-site to conserve the acanthus band and mermen supporting the bowl. The central rosettes in the four main basins, all elaborately carved in Carrara marble, also needed careful cleaning and some elements replaced with newly carved marble.

"Part of our Foundation's mission is to preserve the natural heritage that distinguishes great urban centres," said Michael J. Kowalski, Trustee of the Tiffany & Co. Foundation and Chairman and CEO of Tiffany & Co. "To that end, we established a parks program that began with support for the green spaces of New York City, where Tiffany was founded, and now has expanded to include parks in other major cities. We have greatly enjoyed working with the Royal Parks Foundation over the last three years to support and maintain London's

tradition of parks that provide respite and recreation to its citizens and visitors from around the world."

Chief Executive of The Royal Parks, Linda Lennon CBE said, "The Italian Gardens – one of the Royal Parks' greatest treasures – have been beautifully restored. Thanks to everyone involved in the *Tiffany - Across the Water* project, these historic royal gardens and other fountains across the Parks, can be enjoyed by generations to come."

-Ends-

For more information or for high quality images of the project please contact Edwina Bagge on edwina@ktbpr.com – 07500 058 599 or Kerry Hopkins on kerry@ktbpr.com – 07960 258 600 or alternatively contact 0207 924 7214.

Notes to editor:

About The Royal Parks



The Royal Parks is an executive agency of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The Royal Parks are: Bushy Park, The Green Park, Greenwich Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, The Regent's Park and Primrose Hill, Richmond Park and St James's Park. For further information please visit: www.royalparks.org.uk

About Tiffany & Co. Foundation

THE TIFFANY & CO. FOUNDATION

Established in 2000, The Tiffany & Co. Foundation is a philanthropic foundation that provides grants to non profit organisations working in two main programme areas: the environment and the arts. The Foundation's environmental conservation programme promotes responsible mining, healthy marine ecosystems, the enhancement of urban environments and the preservation of culturally significant landmarks. In addition, the Foundation fosters design excellence by supporting organisations dedicated to design and the decorative arts. www.tiffanyandcofoundation.org

About the Royal Parks Foundation



The Royal Parks Foundation is the charity for London's eight amazing Royal Parks. Established in 2003, we reach out to make the Parks part of more people's lives - raising funds for a wide variety of projects from wildlife conservation and landscape restoration, to community sport and art. Our charity registration number is 1097545, for more information, please visit www.SupportTheRoyalParks.org

About the Royal Parks Foundation (USA)



The Royal Parks Foundation (USA) is an independent charity that supports the work of the Royal Parks Foundation in the UK. It helps conserve London's historic landscapes, supports wildlife programmes, promotes horticultural and educational exchanges and aims to strengthen the many links between parklands in the United States and in Britain. It receives full tax exempt status from the IRS under section 501(C)3.

About GHK Architects (project architects)

GHK ARCHITECTS GHK Architects, (Gilmore Hankey Kirke Ltd) is an award winning practice based in Central London. Since 1973 they have developed considerable expertise in the conservation of historic fabric and buildings and have completed conservation projects at the Palace of Westminster, Windsor Castle, Kensington Palace, Hampton Court Palace and Tower of London and many other buildings.

They provide sensitive contemporary and traditional sustainable design solutions for projects that include new build, refurbishment, historic building conservation and creative re-use starting with a thorough understanding of the cultural significance of historic fabric and place. This provides the framework within which informed decisions can be made that respect the past and exploit opportunities for creative reuse and innovation.
www.ghkarchitects.co.uk

About the Cathedral Works Organisation (project contractor)

CWO For more than four decades, **Cathedral Works Organisation (CWO)** has made conserving and repairing the nation's building heritage a mission of excellence. Originally founded in 1965 to undertake the restoration of the Norman Cathedral at Chichester in West Sussex, CWO developed into an independent organisation which is highly respected as one of the country's leading stonemasonry conservation and restoration companies. Its commitment to stonemasonry is far reaching. The company believes strongly in a continued major investment in the craft skills of the master mason and is committed to training at all levels of management and craftsmanship. www.cwo.uk.com

The project in pictures

Postcard from 1914



'Before restoration' images 2011



The basins drained and cleaned



Mould of the swan which sits by the Maiden at the side of The Tazza



Present day



