

The logo for Painswick Rococo Garden is written in a white, elegant, cursive script. The word 'Painswick' is on the top line, 'ROCOCO' is in the middle in all caps, and 'Garden' is on the bottom line. The background of the entire page is a photograph of a field of white snowdrops in bloom, with green leaves and stems. The background is slightly blurred, and there are some white, wavy, abstract lines overlaid on the right side of the image.

Painswick ROCOCO Garden

Preserving heritage,
protecting habitats
and creating connections
with nature

ANNUAL REVIEW
2023

Over the year we welcomed
a record number of visitors
with over **63,000**
coming to enjoy the Garden



WELCOME

In many ways 2023 was one of the Trust's most successful years with a record number of visitors. Just over 63,000 in total which is a delightful affirmation of the Garden's continuing appeal. We also settled into our new temporary visitor facilities which are serving us and our visitors very well. We have tailored our operating model to accommodate these changes which, again, is proving very successful.

This year we have introduced a number of new initiatives including our very successful winter opening, "The Enchanted Garden by Night". This offered a very stylish display of winter lights in the Garden during December and January. In addition, a number of new events were added to the summer programme. These included an opera night, a wine tasting, and an evening of improvised theatre. All of these events have broadened our appeal whilst affording visitors a different appreciation of the Garden.

We continued to invest in the general maintenance of the Garden. Specifically, we have recruited an additional part-time seasonal gardener, hosted a record number of corporate volunteering groups, and continued the focus by our expert team of gardeners on delivering our Conservation Management Plan.

Our trading arm had a successful year with both our café and our shop adapting very well to their new temporary setup. The partnership with Exedra Nursery also continues to go from strength to strength, providing a valuable addition to the on-site retail offering as well as popular horticultural events.

I continue to be grateful to our devoted staff, our volunteers and my fellow Trustees, and everyone else who supports the Garden. It allows us to preserve the gem that is Painswick Rococo Garden, for the present and future enjoyment of the general public.

David Hardie
Chair of Trustees



The Enchanted Garden by Night



Opera Evenings 2022 by Christopher Roehle

Painswick Rococo Garden is the only surviving rococo garden in England. But what does the word 'rococo' mean? Find out what the spirit of rococo is, explore its evolution through history and how this style influenced the Garden as we know it today.

Rococo

Rococo was a style of art, architecture and the decorative arts originating in France and Italy in the 1700s and becoming fashionable from about 1730 to 1770.

It takes its name from the French *rocaille* (pronounced 'rock eye'), which refers to the motifs resembling rocks or broken shells that often formed part of rococo designs.

In addition to *rocaille* motifs, rococo design is characterised by scroll-like, 'C' and 'S' shaped forms, elaborate ornamentation, asymmetry (unbalanced forms, with a mix of straight and curved lines), playfulness and decoration for its own sake.

Although it was never a particularly popular style in English architecture, its influence can be more prominently seen in interior design and decorative arts from the period. This is in part because rococo was originally developed by craftspeople and designers rather than by architects. This origin is also reflected in the importance of hand-worked decoration in rococo design.

The playful, riotous spirit of rococo found exuberant expression in a relatively brief but fascinating phase in the history of English garden design.

The term 'rococo' came to be used for a period of English garden design from 1740–1770 which applied the ornamentation and flamboyant spirit of the rococo to the design and layout of paths and flower beds, as well as garden buildings and other structures.

Rococo gardens were often small in scale (appealing to the *nouveau riche* and smaller landowners) and thus sought to create miniaturised landscapes.

The rococo spirit allowed for many relatively ephemeral, inexpensive and rapidly-constructed features, giving plenty of scope for gardeners of the time to try out new ideas and fashions.

Many of these gardens were designed or influenced by amateur artists, or by the owners of the gardens themselves.



Thomas Robins recorded the layout of Painswick Rococo Garden in a remarkable painting dated 1748, immortalising a fashion whose exemplars have all but disappeared.

o Style

CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2023 we have further strengthened our charity's foundations by focusing on what is important to us and the local community. After three years of significant change, it is particularly pleasing to be entering a period of relative stability and calm. This provided the perfect platform for achieving some of our goals.



Credit: David Broadbent



Media appearances

The Plunge Pool featured in Luke Edward Hall's roundup of his favourite pool designs in the *Financial Times* in May. He wrote: "I love this pool because it fits so snugly into its environment, nestled as it is in a shady corner, surrounded by a deep green blue of plants, trees and flowers". And we also popped up on the BBC's *Watchdog* programme where presenter Matt Allwright used the maze as a location for a number of interviews with contributors. And we featured in *Historic Houses* magazine, *Cotswold Life* and *This England*.

Fundraising

We have been the lucky recipients of a grant thanks to the generosity of the Painswick Valley Conservation Society, which has donated a sum of around £2,000 to assist with the replanting of the Hidden Hollow area. We have had to fell a huge number of ash trees due to ash dieback, and the monies donated will add a substantial number of indigenous British tree species to those already planted to help regenerate the woodland canopy.



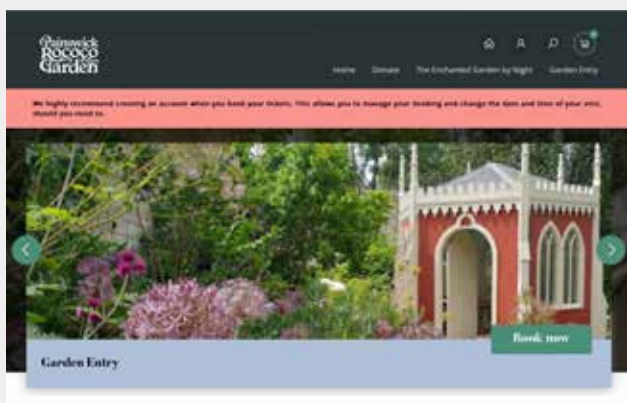
Did you know:

The Enchanted Garden by Night
winter trail **attracted 6,672 visitors**



Credit: Simon Pizzezy

step into a world of wonder



New till system and online booking

On an operational level, we implemented a new till and online booking system. This has been a great improvement, allowing us to administer memberships and booking efficiently. Online bookings have contributed to our success during busy times because it means people can book in advance, thus avoiding queues on arrival. We can space out our visitors during the day which means less pressure on our car park and facilities.



Corporate Volunteers

We welcomed a record of thirteen corporate volunteer groups to the Garden in 2023. We are always happy to accept extra helping hands, especially when it comes to some of the bigger jobs like bulb-planting. To name a few, Ecclesiastical Insurance, Nationwide and St James's Place plc. chose us for their staff volunteering days and we are always incredibly grateful for the energy the volunteer teams bring.



Did you know:

During the calendar year we sold
25,000 cups of tea and coffee

CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



Credit: Simon Pizey



Enchanted Garden By Night

Our beautiful and popular summer willow-sculpture was adapted for the darker December days, bringing a brand new opportunity to see the Garden charmingly lit up by night. On display were dancing fairies, mischievous boggarts, magical unicorns and friendly dragons, all elegantly illuminated against the background of our beautiful Garden.

With numbers strictly limited, this was a classy, intimate and good value Christmas treat. We served delicious seasonal treats and winter warmers such as marshmallow-topped hot chocolates and mulled wine for the grown-ups. And our shop was open for locally sourced gift ideas and our own range of food and drink, made with produce from the Garden.

Planting

10,000 narcissi were planted in the autumn by our dedicated team of staff and volunteers (along with extra pairs of hands from a couple of corporate volunteer groups), which is making the Garden looking spectacular in the months after our ever-popular snowdrop display. The aim is to attract visitors in the quieter months of March and April.



Exedra coaster design by Freya Snow



Collaboration with artists

Starting a residency in the Garden in 2023 was local artist [Angie Spencer](#) who has become a very welcome regular guest. She described the Garden as “an artist’s paradise” and has created a series of eye-catching paintings, some of which have been made into greetings cards for sale in the Shop.

Also on-site in 2023 was our resident artist Natasha Houseago, a professional sculptor who mainly works with green wood. We had a lot of wood from our ash trees that we sadly had to fell due to Ash dieback disease, and Natasha turned some of it into beautiful sculptures that were on display around the Garden. Natasha also taught the art of basic wood carving in a number of workshops during the year.



Events

We’re developing our programme of events to make the most of the wonderful space we look after. As well as the ever-popular outdoor theatre shows, we hosted an extremely busy family dog show in partnership with the Cotswold Dogs and Cats Home, solstice yoga, a village picnic - and we had a number of small weddings in the diary. Our opera night and the summer safari wine tasting in July also both proved to be popular new additions to the season!



Credit: Emma Hiatt

CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



Celebrating a year of partnership with Exedra Nursery

Our partnership with Exedra Nursery successfully continued in 2023 with their friendly team selling top-quality plants and dispensing expert gardening advice. Between April and September, you could learn and develop your skills in a range of horticultural techniques in an intimate, workshop-style setting.



School visit

One of the benefits of being closed Mondays and Tuesdays off-peak is that we can host a variety of groups to enjoy the site at their own pace. At the end of June we welcomed 90 pupils aged 5-6 from Rowanfield School in Cheltenham who came to learn about wild and garden plants.



Did you know:



Through book donations alone we raised over **£1,948**



Our honey was the bestseller in the gift shop, selling **679 jars**

OUR **THREE** KEY AIMS

Painswick Rococo Garden employs 29 staff members, supports over 60 volunteers and is guided by nine trustees. Together our mission is threefold:

▶ **Preserve** the heritage of the Garden for future generations

▶ **Protect** our natural habitats, wildlife and plants

▶ **Provide** a place to escape, explore and connect with nature



Credit: Jeff Wilson

ACHIEVING OUR KEY GOALS

We have set ourselves three key goals for the future:

Image: David Broadbent



Repair & Maintenance

WE WANT TO COMPLETE OUTSTANDING REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE WORK

The Exedra had suffered due to the damp and cold of a number of winters and so a programme of repair and repainting was undertaken during the autumn of 2023. With scaffolding erected after the busy summer holidays, professional heritage plasterers moved onsite to remove and replace the existing blown plaster work. Several areas of the wood-clad columns were severely rotten and needed some skilled repairs. The last coat of plaster was completed at the end of November and the renovation was finalised with a clean and bright coat of heritage off-white paint.



The Red House received a fresh coat of paint after the previous one applied a few years back deteriorated a lot more quickly than we anticipated. An even higher quality specialist paint was chosen which came at considerable expense but provided amazing coverage.



More work has been completed to restore the Red House Wilderness to its depiction in the Thomas Robins' painting of 1748, which shows the area as low-level planting, without any tall trees. The height of the planting should be low enough for the eye to see from the door of the Red House to the Plunge Pool at the lower end of the Garden, where the statue of Pan would have once stood. This has meant the removal of some exceptionally large trees along with the annual prune.



Replacement visitor facilities

WE NEED TO MOVE OUR OPERATION TO A NEW ENTRANCE BUILDING

Thanks to a lot of hard work in some very cold weather, the Garden's temporary visitor facilities were in situ and operational just in time for the start of snowdrop season in January. The converted shipping containers and other facilities have proven to be adequate temporary accommodation and allowed the main functions of the visitor welcome (toilets, café, shop) to continue to operate successfully.



Restoring Garden Features

WE WANT TO CONTINUE TO RESTORE LOST GARDEN FEATURES

During the summer, a small archaeological dig was carried out at the site of a future restoration project, a seat above the Plunge Pool looking back across the Bowling Green. This is depicted in Thomas Robins' 1748 painting and is under consideration for restoration in memory of the Garden's modern founders, Lord & Lady Dickinson. The completion of the archaeological survey will allow the design process to progress to the next stage.



OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Our future plans will focus on these key areas:

Writing a new business plan

After three years of responding to events outside of our control, we are planning to embrace our future and create a business plan which ensures Painswick Rococo Garden Trust is a resilient conservation organisation fit for the future. We will continue to review our operating model to maintain and develop our financial performance.

Creating a site masterplan

As we look to the future, we will create a detailed plan for the site to address future requirements and to improve our temporary visitor facilities. This site masterplan will address the needs of visitors, staff and volunteers and will form a key part of our future planning to envision our longer-term visitor facilities.

Developing an outreach programme

We want to reach a wider and more diverse set of local community groups and support their needs in a way that benefits them. We will undertake research through a consultation process to initiate a more formal outreach programme.

Volunteers

Our volunteers are vital to the overall function of the Garden. We will investigate ways our volunteers can support our work with the local community, and how our volunteers can support us in achieving our key aims. In return, they will benefit from developing new skills investment in their lifelong learning.

Visitors

We will continue to focus on maintaining a high-quality visitor experience whilst sharing the unique heritage of the Garden. This will be achieved by focusing on how the Garden is used, who accesses it and how we can involve a wider range of people in its heritage and interpretation.

Did you know:



Volunteers put in **more than 5,000 hours** to help us achieve our goals



FINANCIAL STATEMENT

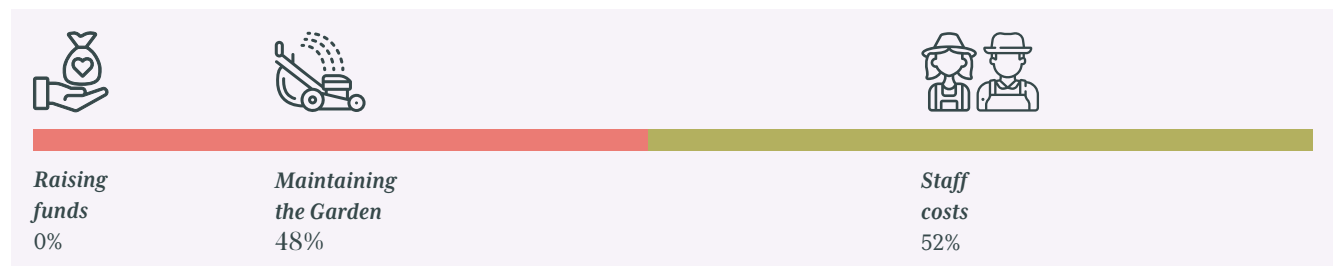
2023

Our full Annual Report and Accounts are published on the Charity Commission website. Find them using our Registered Charity Number: 1107844

Income in 2023 **£638,269**



Expenditure in 2023 **£556,790**



SUPPORT OUR WORK

There are many ways you can support
Painswick Rococo Garden:

Visit us

Donate to our work

Become a member

Volunteer with us

Buy something in our café or shop

Visit our second-hand bookshop

Become a trustee

Bring a friend who's not been here before

Sign up for one of our events or workshops

Book a talk with one of our speakers

Remember us in your will

To find out about any of the ways to support us listed above,
see our website, or email info@rococogarden.org.uk

DONATE TO OUR WORK

Painswick Rococo Garden is a registered charity (1107844). You can support our work in preserving heritage, protecting habitats and creating connections with nature.

To make a secure one-off donation please visit:

<https://rococogarden.digitickets.co.uk/category/58770>

Alternatively, you can use the QR code below to go directly to our donation page:



To find our more and get involved please contact us:

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Photo credits: Adrienn Bencsik, Emma Hiatt, Andrew Pooley, Painswick Rococo Garden, Simon Pizzey, Rachel Turfrey.

Design: lostandfoundcreative.co.uk