

Shared Learning Project with South London Botanical Institute – its history, people and plants



The South London Botanical Institute (SLBI) was founded over 100 years ago to teach local people about botany and this aim continues today at this charming, thriving, slightly quirky, “hidden gem”. The SLBI has a beautiful botanical garden, herbarium and library. It runs a wide range of courses, workshops, school visits and events for all ages.

The SLBI is looking to host a U3A Shared Learning Project to discover more of its history and traditions. We will need participants to interview key botanists who have been involved in the Institute over many years and to capture untold stories about their passion for plants and experiences at the SLBI. Alongside these face to face encounters, we will need to look into archives (at the SLBI and elsewhere) to discover more about botanical experts who have made significant contributions to the Institute and the world of botany. A key outcome will be to obtain sufficient information to enable the publication of a short guide book on the SLBI which would be a product of a second stage SLP.

Other outcomes will be the documentation of the oral interviews and archival research and perhaps giving a talk of findings at an SLBI evening event. SLBI will then be better able to brief volunteers who talk to members of the public about SLBI history.

We are looking for a U3A team to work on this fascinating project. The work will mainly take place on a Thursday at the SLBI in Tulse Hill, London between 10am and 4pm. It is anticipated that the first Project meeting will be on Thursday 13th September. There may be opportunities to conduct tasks at other locations, e.g. to visit archives, to visit interviewees who can't travel to the SLBI and carry out research online. Skills required include interviewing, research and documentation, analysis of findings, and writing. Participants will need to be able to use IT packages as appropriate.

This is an excellent opportunity for people interested in plants to meet others of all ages and backgrounds in a friendly environment. The library is a lovely place to work and the garden is a beautiful place to relax with a cup of tea and your lunch. The Institute is easily accessible by public transport, there is no on site parking.

To apply please complete the application form and return it by email to Jo Walters jo.walters.slp@gmail.com the London Region SLP Co Ordinator by Saturday July 21st. Any initial queries can be directed to Roger Mead: rogermead@btconnect.com .