

'WE'LL BE

CELEBRATING

THIS SUMMER!



'My gardening dream came true!'

Gardening has always been a passion of mum-of-three Fiona Cadwallader, 56, from Canterbury, Kent, but she never thought she'd end up exhibiting at the most famous flower show of all.

I love my annual visit to the Chelsea Flower Show. With its sunshine, scents and stunning displays, it's the epitome of summer. But this year, it was different because, amazingly, one of the gardens on show was my own.

I've always been a keen gardener, and when I first got married and was working as an interior designer, I'd spend as much time as possible in our tiny north-facing garden. I soon realised that careful combinations of plants and shrubs can result in lovely creations and I wanted to learn more. So I enrolled on a year-long course at the English Gardening School.

When we moved to a house with a bigger garden three years later, I was able to let my creativity flow, making a miniature version of a formal garden found in stately homes. As it took shape, clients who came for interior consultations began asking if I could design their gardens, too. Before long, I had expanded my business to cover both interiors and outdoor spaces, and I opened up my garden to the public twice a year to raise money for the National Gardens Scheme.

One day, a visitor asked if I'd thought about applying to the Chelsea Flower Show. I'd never considered taking part in something so grand. But when other people also

Meet the women who, like our cover star, Fern Britton, have a personal reason that makes the summer of 2017 extra special

mentioned it, I decided to give it go. After talking to my husband, Patrick, I began designing my garden. I love poetry and wanted to create a poetry lovers' garden filled with inspiring lime, lemon, white, blue and purple flowers. The idea was that visitors could sit on a chaise longue under the shade of lime trees, reading their poetry books next to a calming waterfall. One of the Royal Horticultural Society's approved contractors agreed to help build it and once I'd put together the drawings, plans and plant lists, I submitted my application.

THE WAITING GAME

What followed was an agonising three-month wait but, finally, in November last year, I received an email – my design had been accepted! I was thrilled. That evening, Patrick and I drank Champagne, but we weren't allowed to tell anyone until the news was formally announced in December. Once it was, Patrick was so proud that he put a sketch of the garden into the Christmas cards we sent to family and friends.

Preparation for the show took over my life. I had endless meetings with contractors, travelled the country inspecting trees, shrubs and flowers and, when the time came, I had just 10 days to assemble the garden.

It was terrifying knowing that more than 160,000 people would see my creation, but the Chelsea Flower Show is the Holy Grail for gardeners, and so having my own design on display was the most unbelievable feeling!



'I got a degree at 34 and achieved my goal at last'

When Jenny Terry left school with few qualifications, she felt like she'd failed. Now the 34-year-old single mum from Brighton, East Sussex, is set to graduate with flying colours.

When I step forward to receive my degree in a few weeks' time, I'll struggle to contain my emotions. I'm so proud to be showing my daughter that her future can be as bright as she wants it to be.

I hated school and left with just four GCSEs. A year later, though, I decided to go to college to do A levels and, although I was thrilled to get a place to study psychology at Sussex University, I struggled from the start. I was the first in my family to go on to higher education and couldn't get it out of my head that university wasn't for the likes of me. I dreaded going to lectures or being asked to speak in seminars.

Then, two months after starting my course, my dad was diagnosed with cancer and passed away shortly afterwards. His death affected me deeply and I left midway through the first year.

I found a job in recruitment, which didn't excite me and I drifted on. In 2010, my daughter Bella was born, which gave me a new purpose. I split with her father before she was one and put my energy into looking after her.

But feelings about my failed university career resurfaced. I wanted to do something meaningful and didn't want Bella to grow up thinking, as I had, that university and a career were only options for other people.

My interest in psychology hadn't waned, so, at 31, I applied to do a three-year course at the University of Brighton. To my delight, I was accepted and secured grants available for single parents.



In September 2014, just as Bella started school, I embarked on my degree. Setting foot on campus, I was nervous: would I be able to cope with the work and being an older student? But this time, I felt at home immediately!

Bella and I settled into a routine.

Most of my work could be done during the day and I was able to pick up Bella from school and spend time with her. On the rare occasions I had events, she went to the breakfast

or after-school clubs. It was challenging, but we made it work.

I studied hard,

writing essays through the night as Bella slept, but I'm on course for a first-class degree, and I've been accepted to do a master's degree in research psychology at the University of Oxford. My ultimate goal is to lecture and work in research.

Going back to university is the best thing I've ever done. My family is so proud of me, and when I accept my degree, I'll think of my dad, too. He once told me he'd be proud of me whatever I did as long as I was happy – and I'm happier than I've ever been.' →

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