

# The world-class Alnwick Garden...

in development



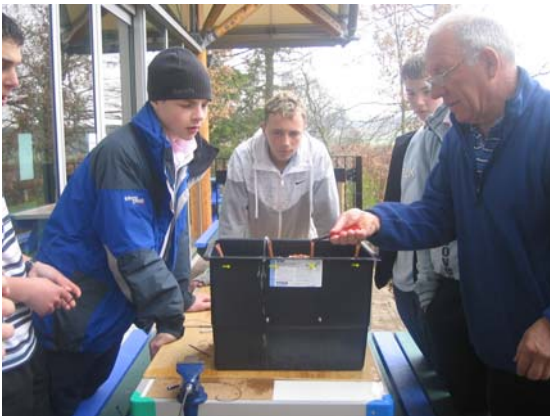
## EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Skills and lifelong learning enrich the lives of individuals, communities and our wider society. Some people have been turned off by bad experiences in classrooms and become 'Kinaesthetic learners' who tend to dislike sitting still in lessons – they learn much more by doing things and finding out how things work. It is certainly possible for them to attain high levels of skill and make great contributions to society but only if they have the right environment for their mode of learning. The tragedy is that too many kinaesthetic learners reject all types of education. Only an environment that is very different to the traditional classroom will re-engage them.

The Alnwick Garden is a premier environmental and cultural resource for the garden enthusiast, keen learner and schoolchild as well as the general interest visitor alike. From the outset, it was apparent that to think of The Alnwick Garden purely as a tourist attraction or horticultural exhibition would overlook The Garden's unique educational opportunities.

The Alnwick Garden's eclectic landscaped environment has the potential to engage all types of learners, including hard-to-reach kinaesthetic learners. The Garden's natural and relaxed environment makes it an ideal venue to encourage the public to take part and have a go. We have a strategy to offer a wide range of courses which, although they will include some indoor work inside our learning centre, will mainly involve practical learning outdoors in The Garden.

Our programme covers a number of subjects such as engineering, science, drawing, reading, drug education, play and leisure and tourism. We also run a number of other activities and adult workshops including: botanical art, essential oil therapy, body art, Bollywood dance, yoga, botany, flower arranging, poisonous plants, digital photography, clay modelling, tai chi, birdwatching and stained glass window design.



Pupils from North Tyneside's Young Engineers programme visited The Alnwick Garden last summer and were given a tour of the underground pump rooms of the Grand Cascade and learned of the design and technology complexity of such a water feature. The pupils were asked to develop their own prototype water fountain with programmed displays using a microchip.

Play is a very big part of The Garden's educational programme as we recognise that it is a fundamental part of a child's development. During one of our projects last year, 'Fairies Tail', children were hoisted into the branches of huge sycamore trees and taught the skills of problem solving to find their way down safely – so few children now have the opportunity to climb trees. The aerialists taught the children to suspend themselves in a cocoon and fly through the trees.



## Project Objectives

- to create opportunities for learners of all ages and abilities, to access the unique learning resources of The Garden by developing a range of learning programmes that stretch the imagination, create fascination and celebrate 21<sup>st</sup> century technology and innovation
- to foster a spirit of exploration and stimulate learning about our natural, cultural and personal environment
- to establish The Garden as a resource for learning in the arts and sciences including horticulture, landscape design and fine arts and establish partnerships with other leading gardens, universities, colleges and schools and the scientific and arts communities
- to develop work related vocational training for a wide sector of potential employees and volunteers
- to build a network of partners and organisations that has the potential to be powerful agents of change, working towards the regional agenda of creating a healthy labour market in the Leisure and Tourism Industry, supported by a highly skilled workforce.



During Science Week volunteers from Sanofi Aventis worked with groups of school children in hands on scientific experiments. The teachers who took part felt that the opportunity for pupils to meet scientists was invaluable. Sanofi Aventis volunteers made a great contribution by the passionate way they described the way they worked and the fascination they created with the experiments they brought.

We explored the amazing properties of water in a workshop devised by The Institute of Physics, aimed primarily at children aged 5 – 9 years. We asked them to look at the different ways in which water can be moved – based on the sculptures in The Serpent Garden.

We were also joined by the Mad Science Company who delighted audiences with disappearing pigs, sound blasts, hovercrafts and flying eggs.

