



## **SLBI Trustees 2020**

**Emmanuel Asamoah** became a trustee in August 2019. He replaced Marlowe Russell as Treasurer in June 2020. He is an ACCA qualified accountant, has an MBA in Financial Management and MSc in Professional Accounting. He has extensive experience of leading Finance, HR, Governance & IT departments, and of running organisations from resources perspectives within and beyond the UK charity sector. He is currently, Finance, HR & Admin Director and Company Secretary for an International development organisation. His interests include music, drumming, snooker, public speaking, and reading.

**Gabriela Avendano** joined the SLBI in early 2020, and has lived locally for twenty years. She is fully qualified RIBA chartered architect and has been running her south London based practice with her partner for sixteen years. Gabriela has experience of wide ranging projects from new-build affordable housing schemes and commercial developments to the extensive refurbishment of historic buildings, many of which have also been listed buildings in Conservation Areas. She also has experience of sustainable building technologies some of which could also be applied to prolonging the life of the SLBI's Victorian home. She is looking forward to learning about all aspects of the SLBI from the team.

**Paul Bodley** is a senior consultant at a leading communications agency where he specialises in brand strategy, integrated communications and content development for some of the world's most innovative companies. Excited by the opportunity to explore the world of botany whilst introducing the subject to new audiences, he joined the SLBI in 2020.

**Michael Clarke** has been a trustee since 2016 and is a long term local resident. He first encountered the SLBI through bringing his children to a half term workshop. He brings a wealth of management and governance experience to the SLBI from his many years working in Digital Media, Higher Education and charities, and is currently Head of Information and Helpline at [Turn2us.org.uk](http://Turn2us.org.uk).

*Founded in 1910 by A O Hume*

**Pat Davies** first came to the SLBI in the 1970s then became a member when she retired in 1988. She then came in every week, working on the herbarium sheets and rotating specimens through the freezer. She previously studied a Botany/Zoology degree then taught 'A' Level Botany, with a particular interest in microscopes. She has been a trustee for over 10 years.

**Mel Harakis** joined the SLBI in 2010. She is a qualified teacher in further education specialising in maths, special educational needs and teacher training. In addition to teaching, Mel has had various roles in the voluntary sector in homelessness, offender learning and mental health, managing both projects and teams. Now living in East London, she grew up in South Devon, where her love of the outdoors and all things green began. A self professed (very) amateur gardener and forager, Mel also enjoys yoga, wild camping and walking.

### **Olly Parsons**

Olly was co-opted to the Board of Trustees in 2020. Olly is Director of the GSMA 'Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation Fund', where he supports the global humanitarian sector to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance through the use of technology. He holds a BSc in Geography and an MSc in Sustainable Development and Technology, and is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. An avid houseplant collector, terrarium enthusiast and lover of moss, Olly supports the SLBI in enhancing Marketing, Communications and Income-Generation.

**Marlowe Russell** has been a trustee since 2007, and served as Treasurer for much of that time. Her varied background includes fine art, running a business, social policy, community work, anthropology, financial management, teaching and creative writing. Not a natural botanist, she is finally acquiring some plant-based knowledge. She is strongly committed to learning, curiosity and the unexpected delights offered by the SLBI.

**Susan Simmonds** is thrilled to be a new trustee of SLBI. A gardener since she was a small child, a career highlight was winning a medal at the Chelsea Flower Show for a charity garden to raise awareness of aging. Susan has spent most of her career in the charity sector as a CEO, Board Chair and international communications advisor; roles which have taken her to Asia, US and the Middle East. When not growing plants, she is a keen diver, genealogist, jam maker and aspiring amateur archaeologist.

**Cherry Simpkin** is the SLBI Company Secretary. She has a law degree and has wide experience in charity governance. She is a member of several plant oriented charities and is interested in the social importance and healing effects of plants.

**Jerry Stevens** lives in Canada Water but comes from further afield, Falmouth in Cornwall. Aside from the Institute Jerry works across the country as a consultant helping public sector and third sector clients increase the efficiency of and improve the services they provide. Jerry is a keen skier having lived in the French Alps for 6 months, has just obtained his power boat qualification and enjoys attending music festivals, this year was his fifth at Glastonbury.

**Roy Vickery** worked in the Department of Botany at the Natural History Museum from 1965 to 2007, and remains a Scientific Associate at the Museum. His Museum activities now focus on lichen and helping with Wildlife Garden events, but for many years he was in charge of the Flowering Plant herbaria. His main interest is in the folklore and traditional uses of plants. He has been a SLBI trustee for many years, including 10 years as chairman.

**Maria Vorontsova** (also known as Bat) has been a grass taxonomist at Kew Gardens since 2010. Her primary research speciality are the grasses of Madagascar and she runs a multidisciplinary research group to investigate their ecology and evolution. Bat is a patriotic Londoner keen on building a better relationship between fellow Londoners and their local plants.