

# Ada & Alfred

A Bermondsey story

for very small children

Words: Sue Rogers • Illustrations: Peter Rogers

# Ada & Alfred

An introduction  
for teachers



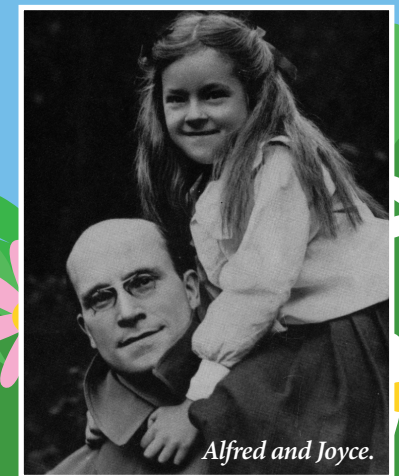
*Alfred and Ada  
photographed sitting in  
their garden, 5 Storks  
Road, in 1909.*

November 2022 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ada Salter being elected as the first female Mayor of Bermondsey and Alfred Salter being elected as a member of parliament, for Bermondsey.

As a couple they were committed to the people of Bermondsey. They lived amongst them and were involved in a range of projects that were designed to make life better for everyone but specifically the poor. Alfred was a doctor who could have practiced in Harley Street but instead chose to stay and treat people, often for very little remuneration. Amongst other things Ada ran clubs for children, organised mothercraft classes and helped the poor. She is perhaps best remembered for her 'Beautification of Bermondsey' which included overseeing the planting of 9000 trees and 40,000 plants and shrubs. She was also involved in the non-violent women's suffrage movement and as a member of the Women's Labour League put forward the idea of the Green Belt, a green space around London to help with pollution, which was passed by an act of parliament in 1938 and still stands today.

The story of Ada and Alfred is complex because of the overriding political nature of their achievements. In our story we have focused on the aspects that we think very young children will be able to relate to, being outside, enjoying nature, fun and fresh air. In 1910 Ada and Alfred suffered a personal tragedy when their only daughter, Joyce, caught scarlet fever for a third time and sadly died. Joyce is an important part of Ada and Alfred's story and for her short life enjoyed all the fun, fresh air, and flowers that her parents could provide for her in Bermondsey.

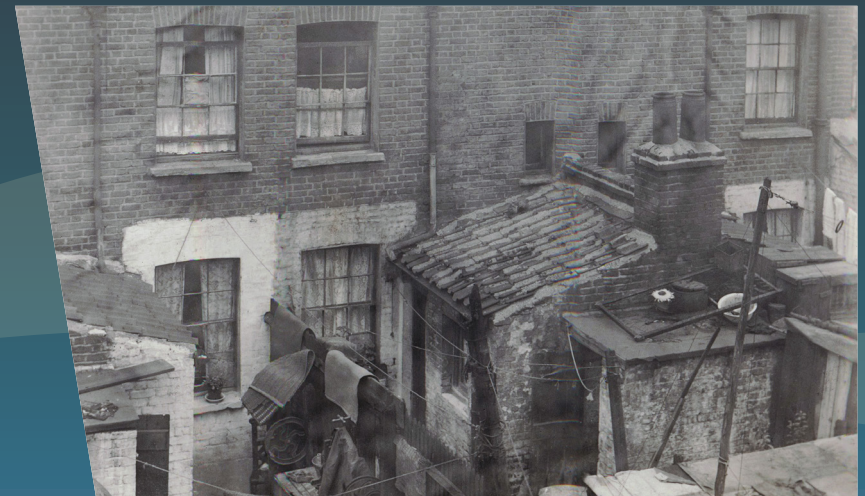
What greater tribute could there be to celebrate the lives and work of Ada and Alfred Salter, than to give children the opportunity to be outside, to play, and to explore the natural world around them? So, although the anniversary of their work is in November the teaching ideas in this book lend themselves much more to the Spring and Summer terms.



*Alfred and Joyce.*

See if you can find the ant on every page

This is Bermondsey. It's a place in London by the river. One hundred years ago it was a horrible place to live. The air was smoky and the streets were dirty. Families lived in just one room of a tiny house that they shared with other families. There were no baths and the toilet, which was outside, was shared by all the people who lived there. Water was not as clean as it is today. There were lots of germs that made people ill and many died. This is the story of two people who made Bermondsey a better place to live.







This is Joyce.  
Joyce is 5 years old.  
She was born in  
Bermondsey,  
in 1902.







This is Alfred.  
He is Joyce's Dad.



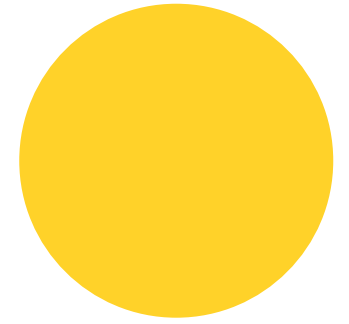
When Alfred was a boy, he loved to be in the countryside, climbing trees and collecting frogs, newts and creepy crawlies.

This is Ada. She is  
Joyce's Mum.



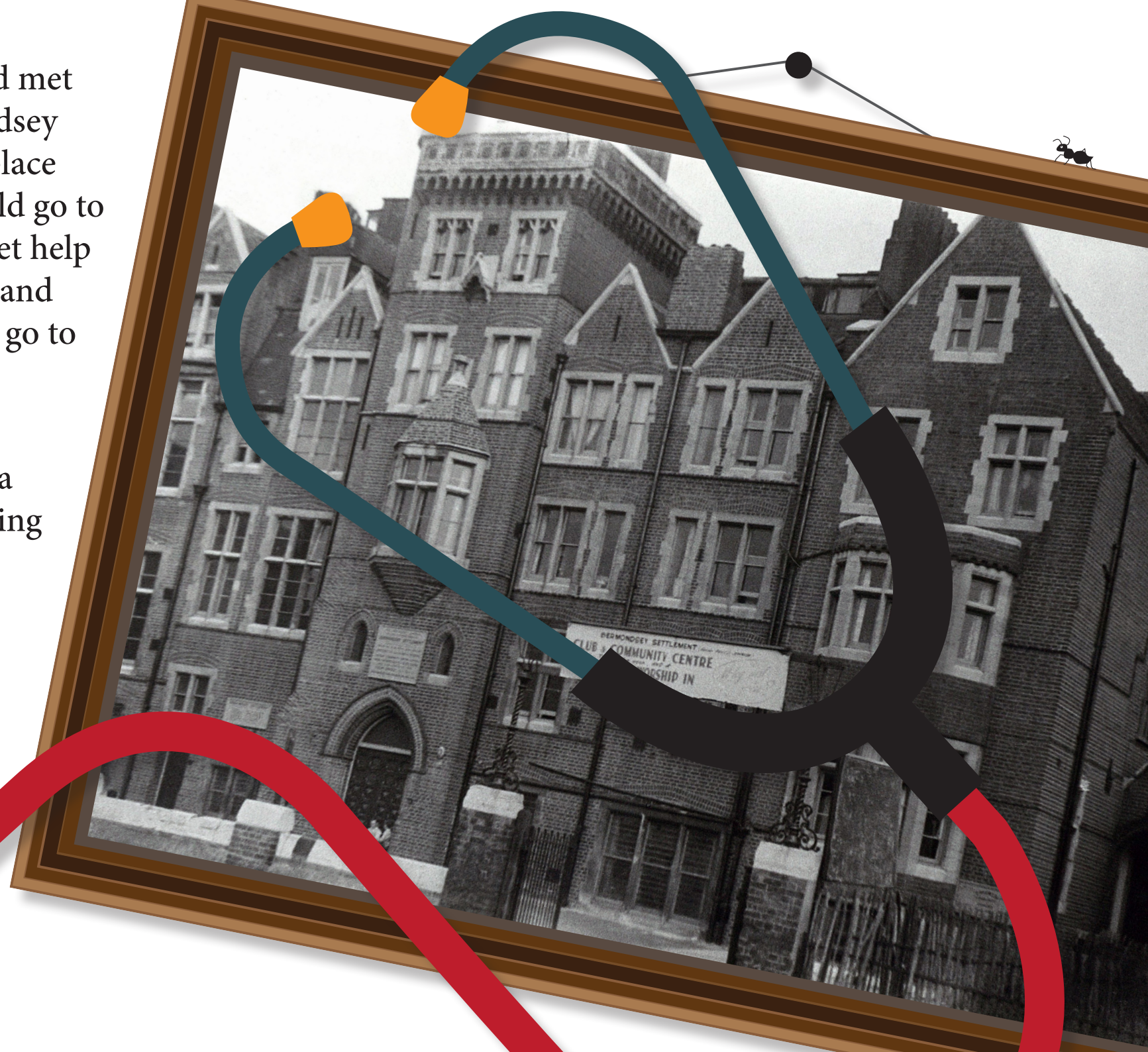


When Ada was a girl, she lived in the country  
and she loved being outside with her brothers and sisters.



Ada and Alfred met at the Bermondsey Settlement; a place where you could go to meet people, get help and medicine, and children could go to different clubs.

Alfred was a doctor and Ada was busy running the clubs and doing all sorts of other things to help people.







When Joyce was born, Ada and Alfred wanted to make Bermondsey a beautiful place for her. They started to plant their small garden with flowers and shrubs so it would feel like the countryside.





Joyce loved the garden. She liked to crawl  
between the flowers and watch all the insects.

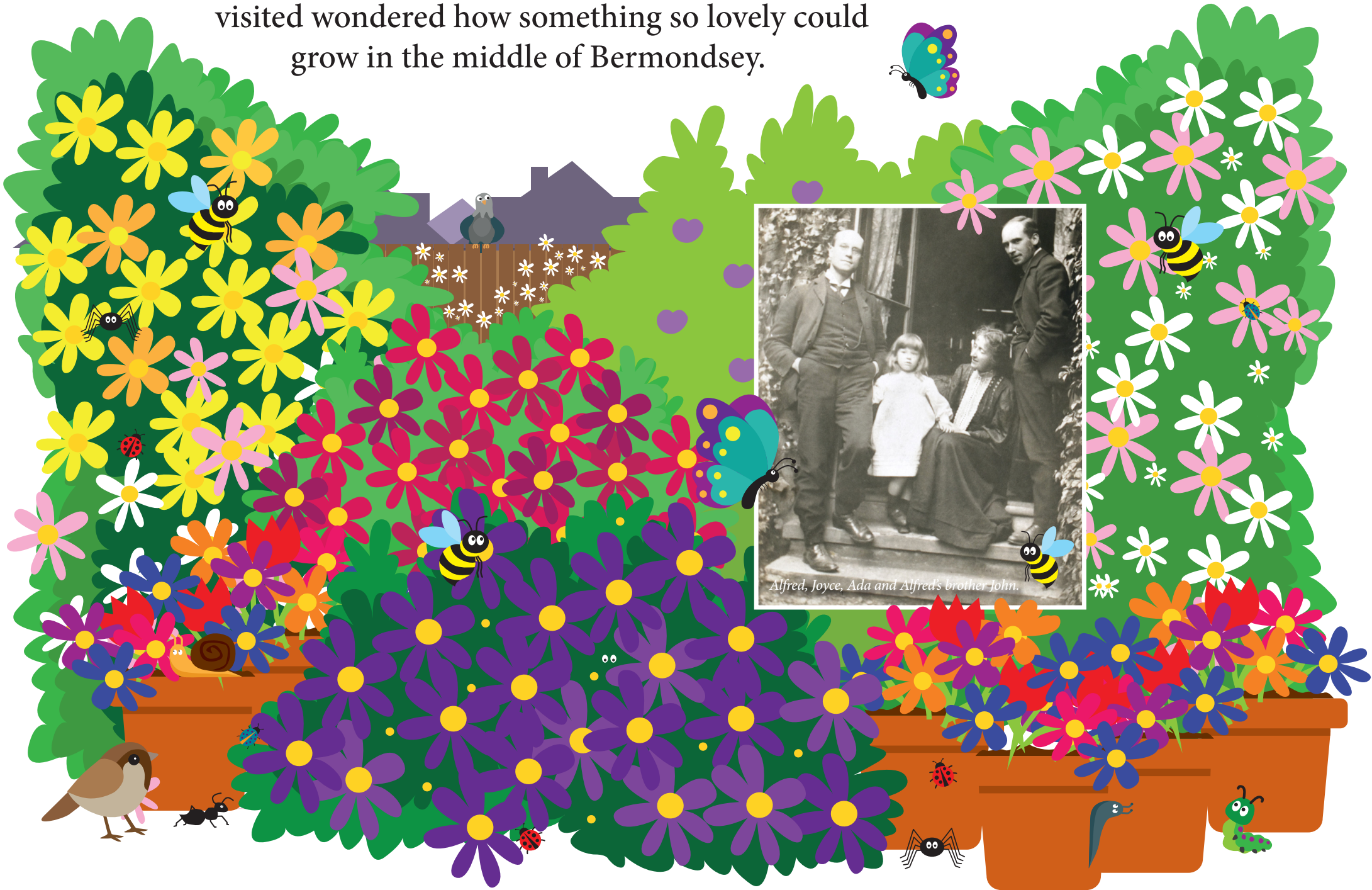


When she was a little bit older, she helped in the garden and loved to plant her own flowers.

She even planted an acorn that grew into a big oak tree.



Year after year the garden became more and more beautiful and people who visited wondered how something so lovely could grow in the middle of Bermondsey.



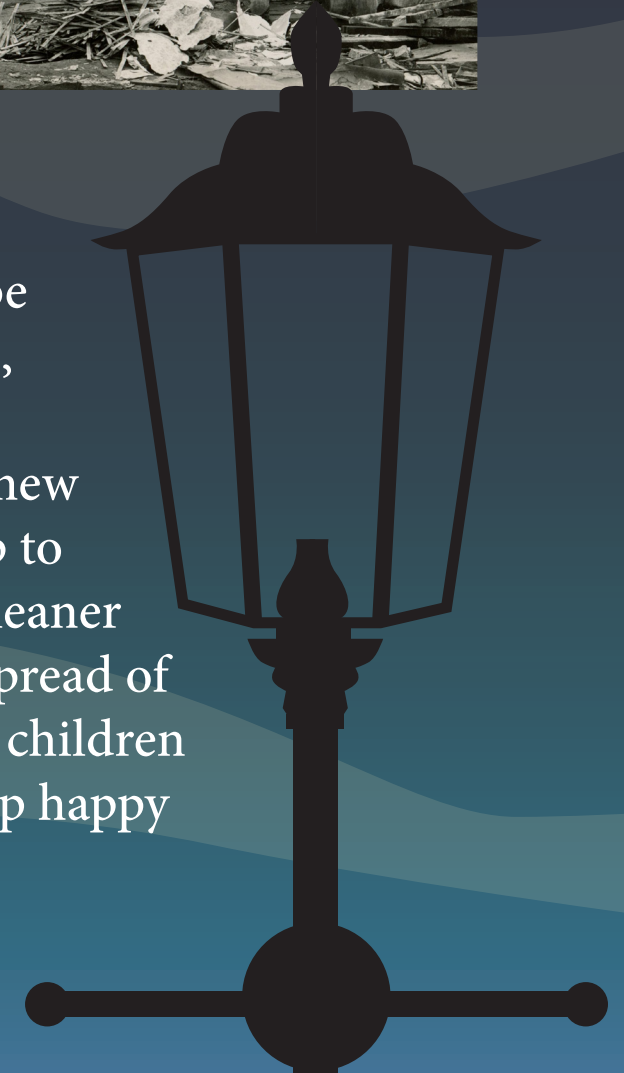


When Joyce was eight,  
she got scarlet fever.  
It made her so poorly  
that she died.  
Ada and Alfred  
were very sad.





Ada and Alfred wanted all of Bermondsey to be like their garden, full of trees and flowers. They knew this would help to make the air cleaner and stop the spread of germs so that children could grow up happy and healthy.





Ada started to teach people how to grow flowers. She gave away seeds and small plants. She started a competition for the most beautiful window box. Soon there were flowers everywhere.





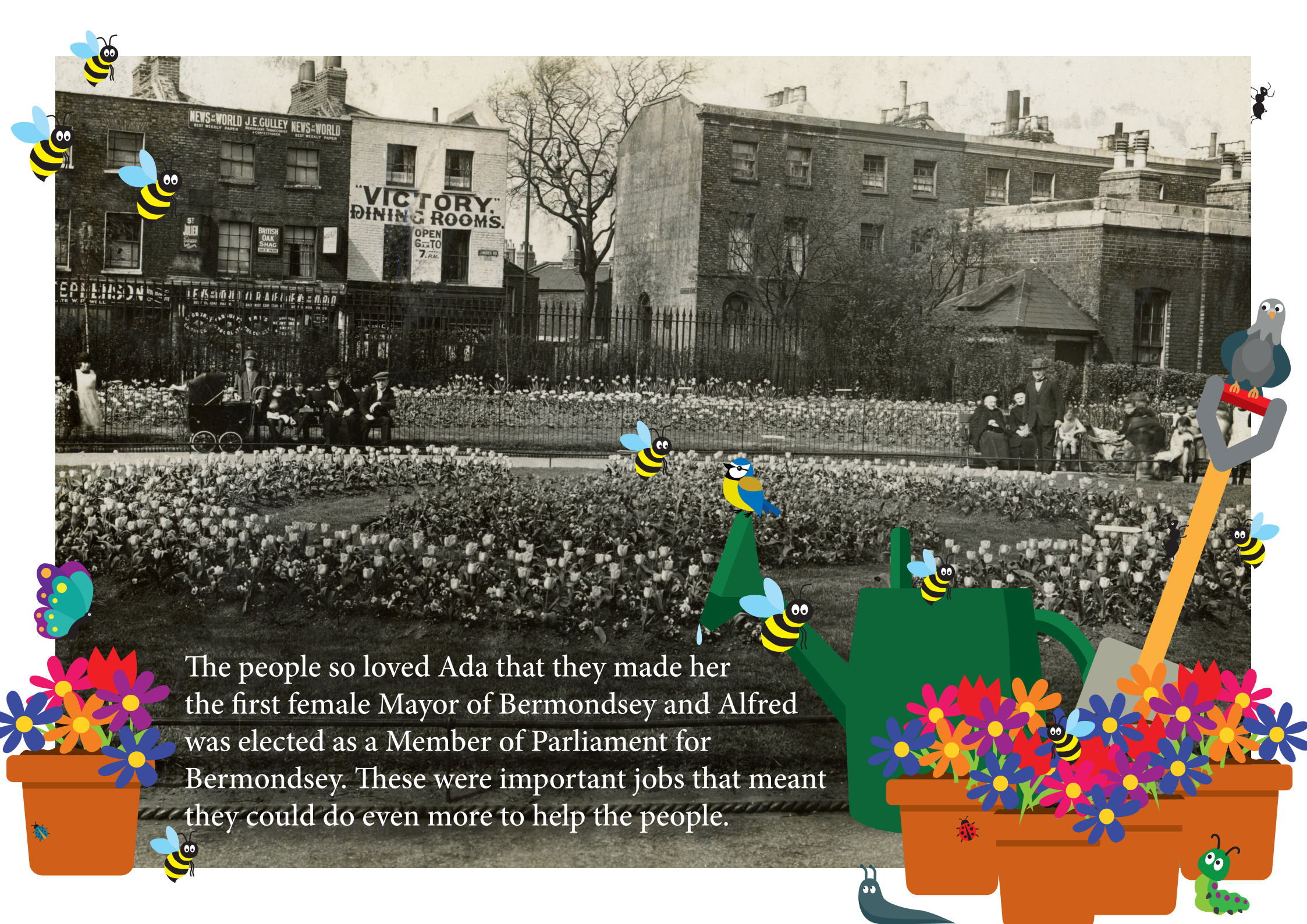


A few years later, Ada was elected onto the Bermondsey Council. She organised the planting of thousands of trees, shrubs and beautiful flowers - EVERYWHERE!

Alfred carried on being a doctor and was loved by all the people because he didn't mind if they didn't have enough money to pay him.







The people so loved Ada that they made her the first female Mayor of Bermondsey and Alfred was elected as a Member of Parliament for Bermondsey. These were important jobs that meant they could do even more to help the people.





As mayor, Ada began to have all the terrible, smelly, damp, cramped old houses pulled down and brand new ones, some like these, built in their place, so that families could have a home of their own...

*Wilson Grove Estate Cottages, built in 1928, pictured in 1934 and 2022.*



...and some were lucky enough to have a garden too!



If you go to Bermondsey, see if you can find the statues of Ada, Alfred and Joyce – they're by the river. Be sure to say hello and thank them for all the wonderful things they did.







# Ada & Alfred

Notes  
for teachers



## In the GARDEN



*Opening of the Tanner Street Recreation Ground, May 1929.*

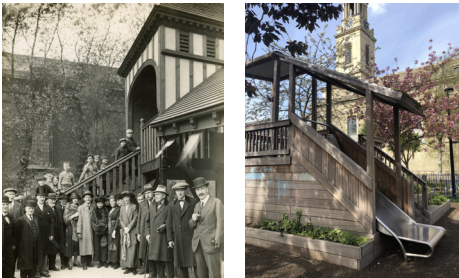
From her days at the Bermondsey Settlement, Ada understood the importance of play and having fun. The aim of the Settlement Movement was to bring the rich and poor together in an interdependent community. Like all other settlement houses it offered social, health and educational services. In Bermondsey they also encouraged and taught dance and music - because they wanted children to play. Together with Ada's love of open spaces and beautiful environments these teaching notes focus on three aspects of gardens:

- **Playing**
- **Planting**
- **Garden mini-beasts**





# PLAYING in the garden



Arthur Carr was the chairman of the Peak Freen biscuit company. Ada worked with him to create a 'joy slide' in the gardens of St James Church. Arthur had often noticed the children using the steps of the church as a slide. The original slide was built in 1921 and there are reports that the children often came down it faster than the speed limit! It was vandalised and removed in the 1980's. A new slide was designed and removed in the 1980's. A new slide was designed by Fergus Carr, Arthur's great, great grandson and this was opened in 2021. It's not quite as big as the original one but nevertheless, a joy for every child who gets to play on it.

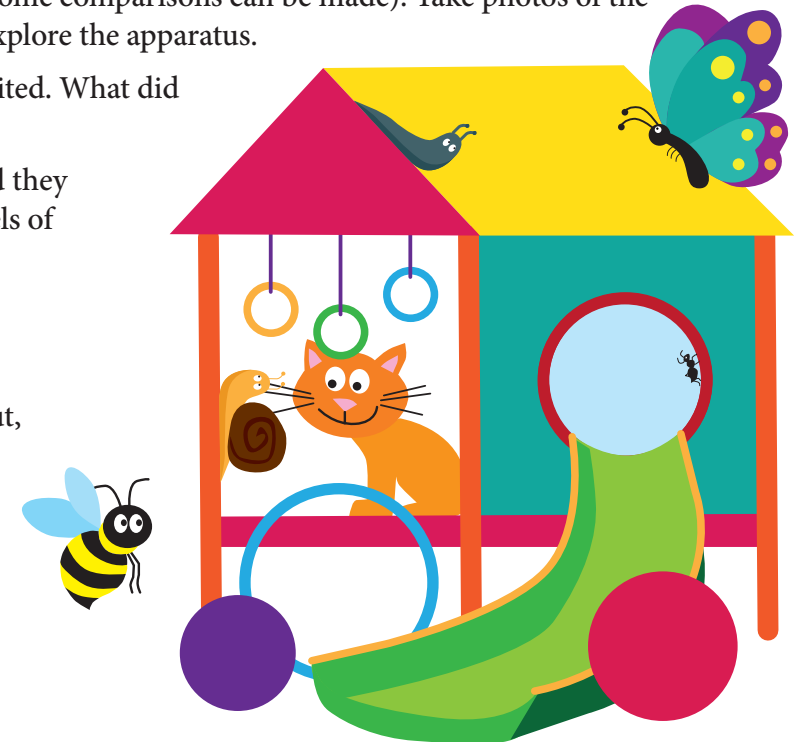
- What do children like to play with in the garden? 'Gardens' includes: their own garden, the settings garden, public gardens, parks and playgrounds.
- Make a collection of natural materials from outside (stones, leaves, twigs etc.), can the children make pictures with the loose materials? Look at Andy Goldsworthy pictures for inspiration.
- Garden/playground games: teach the children some games that they don't already know, this might include: hopscotch, hide and seek, 'Duck, Duck, Goose', 'What's the Time Mr Wolf?'
- Can they find out what games their parents and grandparents played when they were little?
- Can you learn some new skipping or clapping games?
- Treehouses, dens, tents and wigwams: provide the children with a range of materials (boxes, sticks, fabric etc.) and help them to build their own dens to play in.
- Show the children pictures of the 'joy slide'. What do they think this would have been like?
- Visit some nearby playgrounds (more than one so that some comparisons can be made). Take photos of the play equipment to use back at school. Let the children explore the apparatus.
- Discuss with the children aspects of the playgrounds visited. What did they like/dislike?
- Ask the children to design their own playground. Would they have a joy slide or something else? Can they make models of their playground with different materials?

## Introduce the vocabulary:

sand, water, bike, tricycle, scooter, slide, see-saw, roundabout, climbing frame, trampoline, tent, den, treehouse

## Related texts:

When We Went to the Park by Shirley Hughes  
The Big Alfie Out of Doors Storybook by Shirley Hughes  
Duncan's Tree House by Amanda Vesey  
My Grandma Lives in a Treehouse by Christopher Quirk



# GROWING in the garden

## Flowers

- Go for a walk to look for flowers – don't forget that daisies, buttercups and dandelions are also flowers.
- Let the children look carefully at some flowers. Can they draw them?
- Ada's favourite flowers were tulips and in Bermondsey you can go on a tulip walk every Spring.
- Hyacinth bulbs grow easily inside, and the children can watch the flowers appear.
- Can they explore inside the flower i.e. daffodil trumpets are very easy to look into – what can you see? Can you see more with a magnifying glass?
- What is pollen and why is it important?
- Can you plant a wildflower meadow? The seeds are relatively cheap and will grow in a barrel or trough. Wildflowers attract bees and butterflies, and they are important for the environment. Many local parks now have wildflower meadows that you can and see.

### Introduce the vocabulary:

flower, daisy, buttercup, dandelion, bluebell, daffodil, tulip, rose, stem, leaf, petal, stamen, pollen

### Related texts:

*Billy's Sunflower* by Nicola Moon

*The Extraordinary Gardener* by Sam Boughton

*It Starts with a Seed* by Laura Knowles & Jenny Webber

*At the Bottom of Dudley's Garden*

by Dinah Mason Eagers





# GROWING in the garden *cont*

## Vegetables

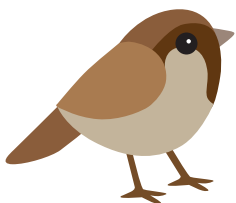
- Let the children look at a range of seeds. They can describe the differences and try to predict what they might grow into.
- Let the children look at and handle some bulbs. They look similar, but what will they grow into?
- Plant beans in a jar so that children can observe the roots growing as well as the shoots. When they have their first set of leaves they can be planted outside.
- Grow some different vegetables: beans, peas, courgettes, tomatoes are all relatively easy to grow and can be grown in a 'grow bag'.
- Potatoes can be grown in a 'potato bag' which enables the growth underground to be observed.
- Jack and the Beanstalk: grow an imaginary beanstalk around the learning environment. Put a paper plant pot on the wall and with the children, plant a paper seed. When they have gone home, add a green paper shoot so that when they return to school the next day, they think the seed is growing. Add to the plant every evening so that when the children return, they think it has grown during the night - awe and wonder! (See 'In Wibbly's Garden' by Mick Inkpen for inspiration!)

### Introduce the vocabulary:

seed, bulb, soil, pot, plant, grow, roots, shoots, beans, peas, potato

### Related texts:

*In Wibbly's Garden* by Mick Inkpen  
*Jasper's Beanstalk* by Mick Inkpen  
*The Enormous Turnip* (Traditional)  
*Oliver's Vegetables* by Vivian French and Alison Bartlett







# GROWING in the garden *cont*



## Trees

- Take the children on a tree walk to look at different trees. What can they see? What they see will be linked to the season.
- Sometimes animals such as birds and squirrels live in trees. Birds build their nests in trees. Can the children make a nest from twigs? It's very difficult – can they make a nest for themselves from something else? The photograph on the left shows a nest that is big enough for children to play in!
- Joyce grew an oak tree from an acorn. What is an acorn? The acorn is the 'fruit' of the oak tree.
- What grows on trees? Apples, pears, plums, olives, coconuts, conkers, oranges, avocados – what else?
- Let the children collect some leaves. Can they see the veins? Can they make wax rubbings of the leaves? What else do they notice?
- Tree trunks have rings that tell us how old the tree is. Let the children explore logs, branches and bark.

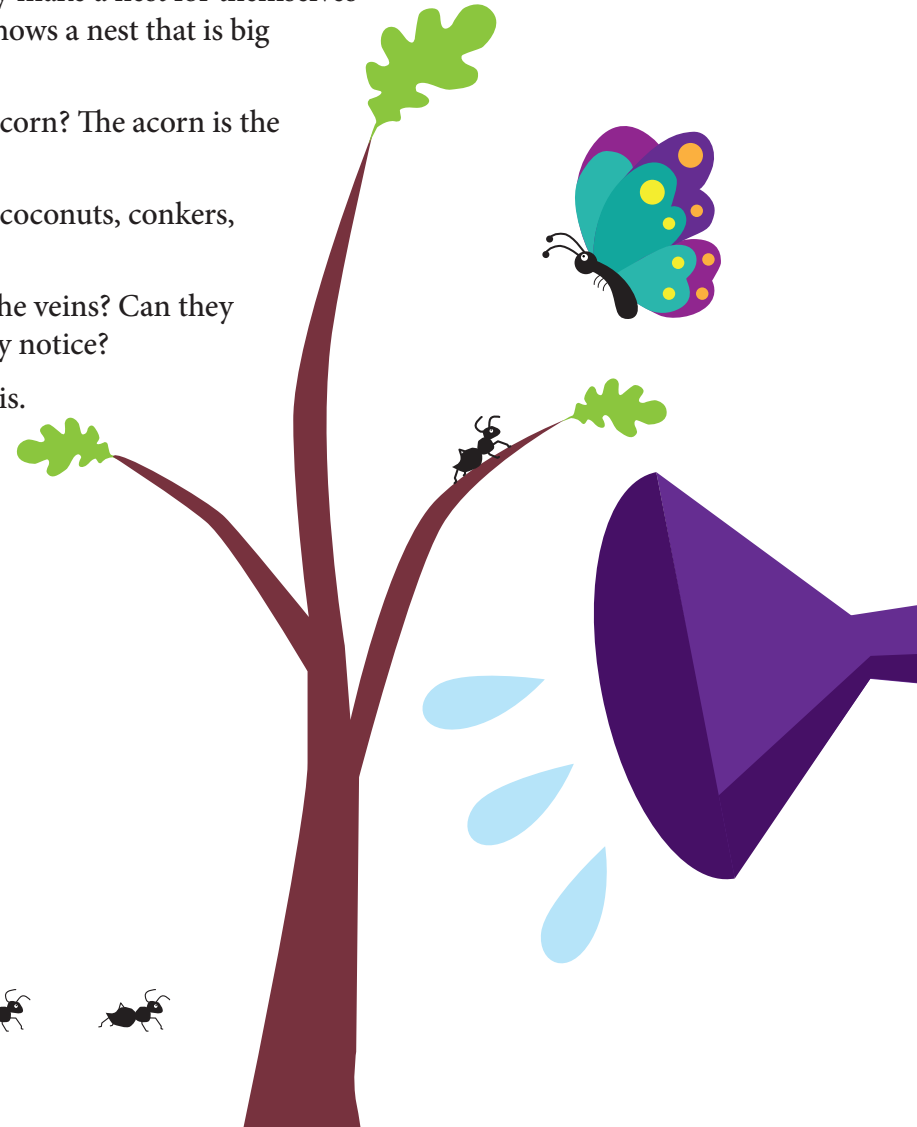
### Introduce the vocabulary:

branch, leaf, bark, trunk, leaf, leaves, blossom, fruit

### Related texts:

*Tree Full of Wonder* by Anna Smithers

*Tree: Seasons Come, Seasons Go* by Britta Teckentrup



# BEASTIES in the garden

## Creepy crawlies

- Take the children on a minibeast hunt. Where might you find them? Under stones and logs, on plants and in the soil. There are lots of insects in the illustration of the gardens, did you find them all?
- Use bug collection boxes to collect what is found. Talk to the children about being 'kind' to the creatures and not hurting them. Be sure to put them back where they were found.
- Identify what is found. What do they look like through a magnifying glass?
- Are all ladybirds red?
- Help the children to build a bug hotel. This can be as simple as a pile of logs.
- Take the children to a pond dipping session. These are widely available at wildlife gardens and nature reserves. Children will be shown how to collect water safely, giving them the opportunity to see some of the little beasties that live in the pond.
- Look at the lifecycle of frogs, toads and newts.

## Introduce the vocabulary:

woodlouse, ant, worm, slug, earwig, spider, centipede, snail, ladybird, tadpole, newt, frog, toad, aphid, leech, pond skater, pond weed

## Related texts:

*Snail on a Whale* by Julia Donaldson

*Billy's Beetle* by Mick Inkpen

*Mad About Minibeasts!* By Giles Andreae

*Bug Hotel* by Libby Walden





# BEASTIES in the garden *cont*

## Bees and pollinators

- What is a bee? Let the children talk about what they know about bees and how they feel about them. Is anyone scared of bees? Why?
- Bees are our friends and are important. We need them to pollinate flowers to make the fruit and vegetables grow.
- Some bees live in a hive, and some are 'solitary'. Show children pictures of different types of bees. Bumble bees look very different from honeybees.
- Bees that live in a hive produce 'honey'. Invite the children to taste some honey. Some honey is thick and needs to be spread, some is runny and can be poured.
- Bees also produce 'wax'. We use wax for - candles, polish, crayons. What happens if you draw on white paper with a white candle and then paint over the top? Wax is 'waterproof' - what does this mean? What would happen if things like coats, tents, umbrellas were not waterproof?
- Butterflies are also pollinators. Explore the life cycle of butterflies.

### Introduce the vocabulary:

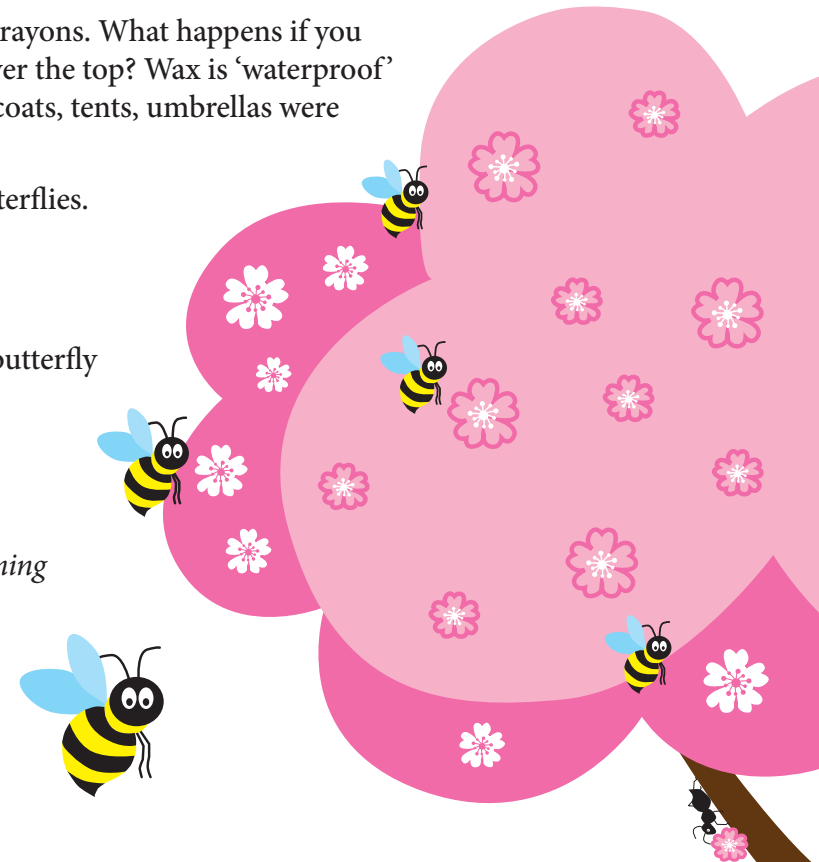
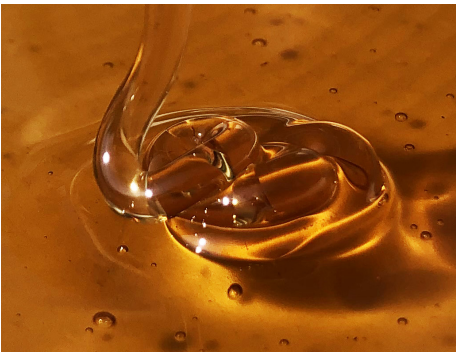
bee, hive, honey, wax, pollinate, caterpillar, pupate, chrysalis, butterfly

### Related texts:

*Monkey Puzzle* by Julia Donaldson

*The Amazing Life Cycle of Butterflies* by Kay Barnham

*Betsy Buglove Saves the Bees* by Catherine Jacob and Lucy Fleming



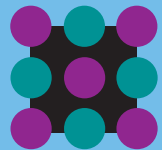




# 'The cultivation of beauty is a civic duty'

*Ada Salter*

**Our thanks** to Dr Patricia Dark, the Southwark Archivist, for her help and support and to Southwark Archives for their permission to use all of the black and white photos in this book, with the exception of the photograph of 'Alfred, Joyce, Ada and Alfred's brother John', which was very kindly provided by Joanna Crawshaw (Alfred's great niece) and her husband Sebastian. We must also thank Sheila Taylor (SalterCentenary.org.uk) for her valuable assistance.



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