

## Imperial Garden Cities: Babylon, Palmyra, Samarkand, Agra

<b>Date/Time</b>	Friday 4 July 2025 11am-4.30pm	<b>Price</b>	£49
<b>Venue</b>	Lettsom House, 11 Chandos Street London W1G 9EB (NB: There is no lift in this building)	<b>Lecturer</b>	Sue Rollin

Gardens for pleasure and leisure, memorial, ornament or horticulture have been a feature of urban and country landscapes since antiquity. In both Christianity and Islam gardens with abundant flowing water, fruit trees and fragrant flowers are associated with paradise. This study day takes us through four garden cities and more than 2000 years. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were built according to tradition by King Nebuchadnezzar for his Median queen, who missed her mountain homeland. Were they myth or reality? Palmyra, an oasis city in the Syrian desert, is surrounded by vast date palm groves. A wealthy trading emporium, it was one of the grandest cities of the Graeco-Roman Orient. Samarkand, visited by Alexander the Great and destroyed by Genghis Khan, was rebuilt by Tamerlane. Heir to the nomadic traditions of the Central Asian steppe, Tamerlane often held court in the splendid gardens which surrounded his capital. Mughal Agra was developed as a riverfront garden city, described by a contemporary poet as 'a sweet-smelling garden with new blossoms' with pavilions, fountains, pools, water wheels, baths and running water in over forty gardens along the river and within the imperial fort.

### Lectures

- 1 Babylon: Hanging Gardens and more
- 2 City of Palms in the Syrian desert: Palmyra and its empire
- 3 Samarkand: A Timurid garden city
- 4 Agra: City of riverfront gardens

### Lecturer

**Sue Rollin** holds degrees in Near Eastern archaeology, South Asian studies and in conference interpreting. She has tutored and lectured at London and Cambridge Universities, had a post as staff interpreter at the European Commission and currently works as a freelance interpreter, lecturer and tour guide. Sue has led cultural tours in Spain, Sicily, Morocco, the Middle East, Central Asia and India and co-authored two travel guides: the *Blue Guide to Jordan* and *Istanbul: A Traveller's Guide*. In the UK she lectures for the Arts Society and has contributed to V&A study courses. Sue speaks French, German, Spanish and Italian and works regularly as an interpreter for international organisations.