Growing Communities

Royal Horticultural Society

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The RHS Community update

Britain in Bloom 2010: the finalists

Trees for evacuees
Guernsey remembers

Fundraising: everything counts
An inner-city success story

Conservation gardening

Campaigns launch 2010 – creating a River of Green

RHS Britain in Bloom and RHS It's Your Neighbourhood kick off the year on 27-28 March 2010 in communities all across the UK.

The theme for this year's launch event is "Creating a River of Green" or "mass greening" so we have asked groups to focus their launch event activities on planting or greening up activities. We will also be trying to link into the fact that 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity.

The RHS is organising the Press Launch which is being held on 24 March in London and we hope to really kick things off with a bang and grab the media's attention so that the buzz will trickle down to regional and local media and help all the participating groups get plenty of coverage of their own events.

The RHS is providing groups with support materials to help them promote their events locally so keep your eyes open for information about events near you.

Congratulations to our representatives in Europe

The UK is a member of, and participant in, Entente Florale Europe, a "Bloom-like" campaign focusing on the greening of towns and villages, ecologically and environmentally sensitive development, the management of green spaces and education and communication initiatives which promote environmental awareness.

Twelve European countries participate in Entente Florale Europe and each year each country may nominate two communities to represent them. In 2010 the UK's representatives are **St. Brelade** (Jersey; 2009 RHS Britain in Bloom Gold & Category Winner, Coastal 12k and below) and **Stockton-on-Tees** (Northumbria; 2009 RHS Britain in Bloom Gold & Category Winner, City).

Congratulations St. Brelade and Stockton-on-Tees!

The UK's participation in Entente Florale is managed by the RHS as part of its stewardship of Britain in Bloom. In addition to having two communities participate in the campaign, the UK also has a member on the Entente Florale Board and two jury members. The jury members are former members of the RHS Britain in Bloom UK Judging Panel and are selected by the RHS and the Chairman of the Judging Panel. This year we would like to welcome **Sue Rodrigues** as one of our new jury members.

Congratulations Sue!

And last but not least…
We have one final announcement: our seasoned Entente Florale jury member, **Clive Addison,** has been selected as the Chairman of the Entente Florale Europe jury by a landslide vote.

Many congratulations to Clive!

News from...

Welcome to our new news section where we will post announcements and news-in-brief or "nibs" from the RHS, the regions and nations, Affiliated Societies, "in Bloom" groups and Neighbourhood groups. **The section is only as good as its contributions so if you have something you think other readers would be interested to know, please do tell us about it.**

Highgate Horticultural Society celebrated 150 years as a society

To mark the occasion, they completed a joint project (in partnership with the United Reformed Church) to refurbish the garden in the front of a local chapel. The garden was officially opened by Lynne Featherstone, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, during a celebration party held on 11 September 2009. The event was attended by many of the society's members and included a display of memorabilia from their archives. The newly refurbished garden has since won a Certificate of Excellence from the London Garden Society in the Garden Display in a Public Place category. On 15 December 2009 the current committee met to mark the 150th Anniversary of the inaugural meeting of the Society and to toast its longevity and look to the future.

And also **celebrating 150 years as a horticultural/gardening society** are:
Hailsham Horticultural Society
Kidlington Gardening Society
Aylesbury Gardening Society
Bovey Tracey Horticultural Society
Congratulations to you too and best of luck for your continued success!

Beautiful Scotland hosts reception in Scottish Parliament.

(NB: Beautiful Scotland is the equivalent of "in Bloom" in Scotland)

A Parliamentary Reception, hosted by Bruce Crawford MSP, took place at the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 3rd February to celebrate the Beautiful Scotland campaign and to reward volunteers from across Scotland who worked tirelessly throughout 2009 to improve the quality of their local environments. Roseanna Cunningham, Minister for the Environment, gave a heart-felt thank you to all present, and spoke about the benefits the Beautiful Scotland campaign brings to communities the length and breadth of Scotland. The Minister said, "Last year around 300 communities worked to improve their local areas through the Beautiful Scotland campaign, improving their local environments and developing a real sense of community spirit. The Scottish Government is committed to creating a greener Scotland but we cannot do it alone. The Beautiful Scotland awards show that community action can make a difference and I'd encourage other towns and villages the length and breadth of Scotland to sign up and get involved."

Cumbria in Bloom celebrates 25th Anniversary in 2010.

The voluntary group was set up in 1985 with the aim of encouraging community involvement in working to enhance the appearance of the local towns, villages and hamlets. Over the intervening years more than a third of villages and towns within the County have benefited from being part of the region's campaign. Joan Johnstone of Kirby Stephen (Silver Medallist in Britain in Bloom in 2009) recently commented, "Entry into CiB brings out the best in the community with people giving time and talents to a project with real purpose."

RHS Neighbourhood Awards becomes RHS It's Your Neighbourhood in 2010.

See the feature article on page 16 for more information.

South West in Bloom Chairman, Vic Verrier MBE, to retire.

After 26 years serving South West in Bloom, the last 10 of which he spent as Chairman, Vic Verrier has recently retired. There can be no doubt about Vic's contributions to the "in Bloom" cause as he was recently recognised with the RHS Britain in Bloom Outstanding Contribution award. Vic's contributions to horticulture go well beyond "in Bloom" as he was also awarded an RHS Long Service Medal (2001) and an MBE for services to horticulture and the community of Somerset (2002). We wish Vic all the best for his retirement and thank him once again for his tremendous contributions.

Banksian/Grenfell medals update

The time for medal ordering is upon us again. To order your Affiliated Society's personalised, engraved medal, you can now order online at **www.rhs.org.uk/affiliatedsocieties** or by e-mailing **affsocs@rhs.org.uk** or by post at RHS Affiliated Societies, 80 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE. Please ensure those of you who have ordered send us a copy of your show's schedule and visit our web pages for more information and the rules of awarding these prestigious medals. The final deadline for ordering your society's medal is 31st March 2010.

Stationery prices stay low for 2010

Great news for all the Affiliated Societies who take advantage of the extremely competitively priced stationery available from the RHS Mail Order department… prices have not increased at all from last year! You can download the order form at **www.rhs.org.uk/affiliatedsocieties,** or you can request it be sent to you by phoning 0207 821 3069.

The Growing for Success talks series

The Growing for Success series is an annual charitable talks programme that aims to inspire gardeners across the UK to enjoy the range of benefits associated with gardening on a more regular basis. The RHS subsidise these talks to encourage a diverse audience to listen to high profile speakers. The talks are often held within beautiful gardens, sometimes offering a drinks reception and/or book signings. There is also a Growing for Success talk at each of the RHS London Shows in 2010. We have some fantastic speakers lined up this year including Chris Beardshaw and Ursula Buchan.

For more information on all of the talks taking place in 2010 please visit **www.rhs.org.uk/rhseventfinder.**

Trees for evacuees

This year sees the 70th anniversary of the evacuation from Guernsey of over 20,000 inhabitants escaping the imminent arrival of German occupying forces at the start of World War II.

To mark the occasion, the island's Britain in Bloom entry of St Pierre du Bois, or St Peter's as the parish is more commonly known locally, brought the community together to plant a lasting legacy of trees.

Marguerite Talmage, a member of the Floral St Peter's Group (the parish's "in Bloom" group), explained more about this local roots initiative. She said: "In June 1940, many St Peter's families were involved in the heartrending decision of whether to send their children away to safety, or remain in the island and face occupation by the enemy. Those who left were to be away from their homes for five long years. 70 years on, the parish wanted to commemorate those difficult days by planting 70 trees.

"A canopy of English Oak, Alder, Willow, Sweet Chestnut and Ash with an under story of Hawthorne, Crab Apple, Holly and Elder was planted in the heart of the parish in Le Ch'min du Trésor. The name means 'a walk on church land' in Guernsey French, and it's a circular route created on glebe land winding around the rectory through natural woodland, into a meadow below.

"The trees were provided by 'The Green Legacy Project', a local charity that aims to facilitate the enhancement of Guernsey's green infrastructure and educate both adults and children about the value of plants."

Commemorating the island's heritage in this way involved young and old alike, said Marguerite: "Over 150 St Pierrais, (St Peter's parishioners) took part, including evacuees, representatives from youth and sports clubs, as well as primary school pupils. The planting event was also entered in the BBC 'Breathing Places Tree O' Clock' attempt to plant a world record number of trees.

"It is hoped that these trees will benefit our community, as well as our native wildlife and the environment. We are working with local conservation organisation, 'La Société Guernesiaise', to establish a working plan for encouraging insects, birds and all types of wildlife into the meadow, as well as protecting the rich variety of plant life already established there."

Concluding, Marguerite said: "Once the majority of trees had been planted, Guernsey's Bailiff, Sir Geoffrey Rowland, and six former evacuees planted a copse of seven English Oaks which will create an area for quiet reflection. The church bells rang out to bring the formal part of the occasion to an end, and everyone gathered to chat about their morning's work and enjoy well earned coffee and bacon rolls."

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>
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