

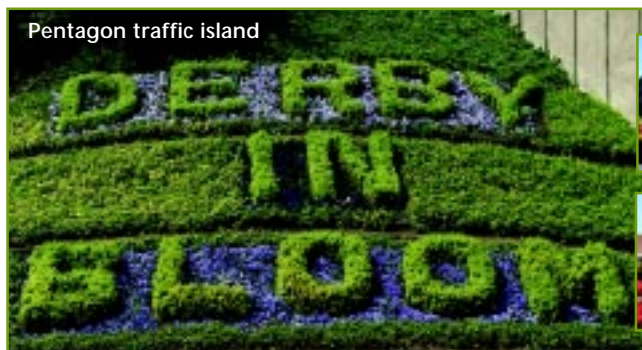
Bloom Review



ISSUE No. 6

SPRING 2005

UK Finalists meet in Derby



Pentagon traffic island



Derby's colourful bedding schemes

The 2005 Britain in Bloom UK Finalists Seminar in February has been hailed as a great success, with delegates getting together to discuss their plans for the coming year and attending seminars that offered hints and tips on the many different aspects of the campaign. Expert advice was provided by speaker Simon Thornton-Wood (RHS Assistant Director – Science & Learning) who spoke about 'Environmental Sustainability in Communities and the wider RHS objectives'. (For more on Simon's seminar, see page 7.)

As recipient of an RHS Britain in Bloom Silver Gilt achievement award and winner of the City category in 2004, Derby was proud to host the event at the Assembly Rooms in the city centre.

Stuart Kitchen is Derby City Council Parks Officer and co-ordinator for Derby in Bloom. He explained that a lot of hard work has been done through Derby in Bloom over the past 15 years to help improve the city. "The campaign is very much a people-focussed one, with large numbers of residents from all sections of the community involved in improving their environment. Our success last year was fantastic in motivating our staff and giving

residents and businesses something to be very proud of. It has also stimulated us to keep working on further improvements."

Describing their Bloom entry, Stuart said, "We try to be innovative in our design of bedding schemes. We have been moving towards using a greater variety of plants, such as coleus and dwarf dahlias like 'Moonfire' that offer beautiful bronze foliage.

"Creating bedding schemes takes a lot of skill and patient planting. We have a very dedicated grounds team that work long days in the summer to keep on top of watering and maintenance so that the beds throughout the city look their best.

"An area that catches the eye of every visitor to Derby is the carpet bedding display on the Pentagon traffic island. We created the design as an answer to a steep bank that was difficult to access and had become covered in brambles. Using golden box hedging that spells 'Derby in Bloom', with a backing of the glossy green foliage of *Pachysandra terminalis*, we have created a 3-D textured design that stays in year on year and provides good ground cover with low maintenance."

Offering words of encouragement to other Bloom entries, Stuart continued, "One thing I could recommend is to make a three-minute video, showing the judges the work that has gone on all year round and areas not included on their tour. This allows you to easily highlight things like the spring bulb colours and winter permanent planting."

Commenting on Derby's achievements, East Midlands in Bloom Judge, Doug Stacey said, "Derby was so delighted to have won nationally. They have been working very hard for many years and the whole community is involved.

"One very creditable feature with their entry recently has been the involvement of their local newspaper the 'Derby Evening Telegraph'. It has proved to be a great supporter of Derby in Bloom and has encouraged everyone to take part in the Bloom competitions in the city. Residents, businesses and community groups working for the Bloom generate a lot of 'human interest' stories, from their backgrounds to their successes and that has helped the paper and awareness of the Bloom."



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News ...

Thanks to B&Q

B&Q continue their involvement with Britain in Bloom, working in partnership with the RHS. Thanks to their support we have posters available for all communities to use to help promote local events, activities or to communicate information. These A3 posters are available by emailing biancalapins@rhs.org.uk with your name and address.

Grow Your Own

There are many health benefits associated with gardens and gardening including the fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs that can be grown to supplement people's diets. Home-grown food not only tastes great, it can also have the benefit of being grown organically and without chemicals.

In 2005 there will be a special 'Grow your Own' theme for all Britain in Bloom communities, with the RHS presenting a special discretionary award to the UK finalist entry which grows fruit and vegetable in unique and imaginative ways (see page 4). The RHS website contains a wealth of information about how to grow and maintain fruit and vegetables at www.rhs.org.uk/advice/problems_archive.asp

UK Finalist

Unannounced Judging

UK judges are excited about unannounced judging in Spring of town and city categories with populations 2,501 and over (see page 6). Marks will be added to the summer judging tour to arrive at the overall achievement award. This process will add a more thorough element to the judging process by allowing judges to assess more closely year-round effort and maintenance.

Neighbourhood Awards

The Neighbourhood Award pilot will continue in ten nations/regions in 2005, actively encouraging local people to start 'greening up' their local areas. Local neighbourhoods can enter the pilot category whether or not they are part of a larger conurbation already involved in Britain in Bloom (see page 6). The RHS is delighted to be making a difference to local communities and is thrilled to see the number of entries in this category increase. We hope that even more communities will participate in 2005.

Wishing you a great 2005 from Carolyne, Bianca and Rebecca, RHS Bloom team.



Community involvement grows in Norwich

The dedication and enthusiasm of Bill Webster, Chair of the Friends of Norwich in Bloom, has already earned him a coveted Britain in Bloom Discretionary Award. Yet Bill is the first to stress that he is not alone in his passion and commitment to the Bloom. "I am highly privileged to work with a great team, sponsors, supporters and hundreds of people, ranging from three to 93 years of age, throughout Norwich who are equally committed. In 2004, we brought several of these very different sectors of our community together in a new scheme that was a great success."

Referring to an unusual project in which local prison inmates grew plants for subsequent distribution in the community, Bill explained the new initiative, "Floranova had already sponsored seeds for use in roundabout displays and schools but were keen to do more. Well, it struck me that Norwich Prison had a few under-used greenhouses so I asked if prisoners could utilise them to grow flowers for us. Floranova supplied a variety of bedding plant seeds and B&Q, Britain in

Bradecroft Sheltered Accommodation



Bloom campaign partner, sponsored a whole truckload of compost. It was such a marvellous success that prisoners actually ended up growing



Caroline McCarthy (left), B&Q, listening to Bill Webster from Norwich

25,000 plants! Barford Hire then stepped in to sponsor use of a van for three years and we distributed the plants to 25 blocks of local sheltered housing, schools, youth groups, churches and hospitals.

Recipients then agreed to take over maintenance of the flowers. The wonderful thing is that the project has not ended there. In the Autumn, sponsors supplied more seeds and more compost and the prisoners grew winter flowering pansies.

"We were delighted with feedback from the Britain in Bloom UK judges and are really determined to build on the successes of

last year and try for a coveted Gold Award."

Caroline McCarthy, Community Development Manager from B&Q, visiting Norwich to judge the B&Q Community Awards said, "The standard of the floral displays was outstanding with an amazing variation in colours. Residents at the sheltered housing complex spoke about their involvement with such pride that it very quickly became apparent just how much they had enjoyed themselves. In fact, everyone we met claimed to have learned new skills and were looking forward to continuing the project. The enthusiasm with which Bill and his team promote the Bloom is contagious and I am sure this project will go from strength to strength."

Do you need 'In Bloom' insurance?

For great value public liability and cups and trophies insurance please call:

0161 442 4022

Enjoy RHS Membership for £40

You can enjoy all the benefits the RHS, the UK's leading charity, has to offer for just £40. RHS members enjoy:

- free entry with a guest to four RHS gardens
- privileged entry and special rate tickets to RHS Flower Shows

- a free monthly copy of *The Garden* magazine
- free gardening advice service
- free access to over 120 partner gardens

...and more

For further information call 0845 1304 646 or go to www.rhs.org.uk

B&Q Water-wise gardening: no 'ifs' ... use butts

Water is a limited and important resource that many of us take for granted, however it is essential for the growth and development of plants. By understanding your garden and the plants it contains you can assess watering needs and make economical use of water.

Water butts or other containers can be placed at the base of roof down pipes to collect rainwater - perfect for more established plants. Low-level sprinkler or drip distribution systems are an economical and effective means of watering and can be installed in hanging baskets and tubs as

well as within beds and borders. Water retaining products, such as Phostrogen Swell Gel Crystals 250g size at £4.98 retain water for many days reducing the need for daily watering and prevent pots and hanging baskets from drying out.

Consider establishing wind barriers within your garden that stop plants losing water less readily than on exposed sites, and try to dig soil in autumn or winter rather than spring as this will decrease loss of stored available water by evaporation. Providing a layer of mulch on the soil surface

such as bark, gravel or plastic sheeting will also reduce water loss, will help to suppress weeds and maintain a lower summer temperature in the soil surface layers. Remember that plants compete with each other for available water so make sure you thin overcrowded plants and remove weeds.

B&Q is committed to sustainable environments and stock a range of great water saving products such as the 100-litre Sankey slim, space saving water butt at £14.98 and the B&Q easy watering border and lawn kit at £24.98.



All these products and more are available in-store or at www.diy.com



2005 Britain in Bloom UK Finalists

Numbers refer to the location of Finalists illustrated on map*



Large City (200k+)

- 2. Aberdeen
- 44. Cardiff
- 29. Doncaster
- 49. London Borough of Bromley
- 36. Nottingham

City (100k-200k)

- 9. Derry/Londonderry
- 48. Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

Small City/Large Town (35k - 100k)

- 27. Bury
- 20. Durham
- 54. Fareham
- 52. Horsham
- 33. Newcastle under Lyme
- 39. Norwich
- 51. Taunton

Small City/Large Town (12k - 35k)

- 50. Barnstaple
- 58. St Helier
- 14. Whitehaven

Town (6k - 12k)

- 11. Dungannon
- 1. Forres
- 16. Hexham
- 38. Oakham
- 34. Uttoxeter

Small Town (2,501 - 6k)

- 59. Battle
- 5. Cockenzie & Port Seton
- 46. Frinton
- 24. Garstang
- 12. Moira
- 23. Thirsk

Large Village (1,001- 2,500)

- 26. Barwick in Elmet
- 47. Hutton
- 7. Melrose
- 43. Usk
- 40. Winterton on Sea
- 8. Warkworth

Village (301 - 1,000)

- 19. Coniston
- 3. Edzell
- 22. Heysham
- 25. Luddenden
- 18. Maughold
- 57. Sark
- 13. Scarva

Small Village (300 & under)

- 45. Bray
- 37. Skillington

Urban Re-generation

- 28. Manchester
- 42. St Phillips & St Pauls Floral Trail (Birmingham)
- 15. Workington

Urban Community

- 56. Hampden Park
- 31. Old Colwyn
- 17. Rowlands Gill
- 35. Spondon
- 4. Uddingston

Coastal Resort

- 30. Cleethorpes
- 32. Crickieth
- 41. Great Yarmouth
- 6. North Berwick
- 55. Rottingdean
- 21. Saltburn by the Sea
- 53. Sidmouth
- 10. Whitehead

* locations on map serve as an illustration and are therefore approximate

The 2005 UK Judging Panel

As the new Bloom year gets underway, we can announce that the 2005 UK Finalist Judging Panel is as follows:

- Jim Buttress, Chairman
- Roger Burnett, Deputy Chairman
- Clive Addison
- Peter Holman
- David Jones
- Sue Rodrigues
- Susan Smith
- Mark Wasilewski and
- Ian Wilson

We also give a warm welcome to new judges this year; Jeff Bates, Martyn Hird and Carolyn Wilson.

Jim Buttress takes up the position of Chairman of UK Judges, following Bob Sweet's retirement last year. With a strong horticultural background and almost 30 years of Britain in Bloom experience, gained in his capacities of judge, Co-ordinator, and Chairman of London in Bloom, Jim brings a wealth of knowledge to the role.

Outlining the year ahead, he said, "I am honoured to take on the role of Chairman and I look forward to continuing Bob's work. We aim to extend the number of national judges that we use and hope to bring in some new recruits who are dedicated, knowledgeable and with a private, commercial or local authority horticultural background.

"As the knowledge required by a judge includes an ever-broadening range of topics, such as Agenda 21 and environmental sustainability, we will be arranging judges' training days to ensure that each judge is fully skilled for the role. By involving the RHS in this training and also experts in specific areas, such as risk assessment and health and safety, we will be better able to understand the pressures facing entrants. Although this initiative will help to produce consistent judging throughout the country, we would still fully encourage judges to take an individual approach to each Bloom entry."

For biographies of all judges visit www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom



Cardiff blossoms

In 2005 Cardiff will celebrate its centenary as a city and its golden anniversary as the capital of Wales. This year Cardiff Council's Parks Service will also put the City of Parks firmly on the horticultural calendar as Mike Clark, Operational Manager (Parks & Bereavements) explains. "We are very proud to be hosting the RHS Spring Flower Show where we will officially launch a new daffodil, appropriately called 'Cardiff'. Then in late September, the Britain in Bloom Awards, organised by the RHS in partnership with B&Q, will be held in the city. Horticulturally speaking, it's a busy time for our team. In the Spring, Cardiff will hold the title of European City of the Elm. Also on the agenda is our bid to secure grant aid of £10-12 million through the Heritage Lottery Fund to improve six parks over 10 years through the Parks Partnership Programme."

The Parks Service manages over 1500 hectares of public open spaces and Mike attributes their high standards to two key factors: the fully integrated nature of the Service and the

skills of its staff. Jon Maidment, Operational Manager (Parks) agrees, "We are keen to emphasise, publicise and to promote horticultural expertise amongst our established, knowledgeable staff and our younger trainees. Our three-year Apprenticeship Programme has even opened the door to horticultural links with Cardiff's twin towns of Stuttgart and Nantes, both in terms of training and participation in Flower Shows.

"The wider community can share the Service's expertise through horticultural-themed walks and talks run by Park Rangers. Our website, with full details of these activities, also hosts an excellent guide to plants of interest within our parks (to find out more, please visit www.cardiff.gov.uk). We are now launching an Allotment Strategy in order to encourage investment and development and to promote the associated health, educational, social inclusion and alternative lifestyle benefits."



New daffodil 'Cardiff'

Ruth Mumford, Cardiff in Bloom Coordinator, believes that the Bloom campaign has a key

role in promoting horticultural excellence in the city, "I speak to a lot of different community groups, many of whom are involved in hands-on projects. This year, individuals within some of Cardiff's long-standing entrants have been training as judges to utilise their vast horticultural knowledge in a different way."

Cardiff's firm commitment to raising the skills level amongst professional and amateur horticultural practitioners will help to keep the City very much on the horticultural map.

The RHS Spring Flower Show, Cardiff will be held in Bute Park, on 22-24 April 2005. To book tickets call Ticketline on 0870 066 7799. Tickets booked in advance cost £7 RHS members and £8 Non-members. All tickets on the day £9.



'Grow your own' theme for 2005

Whether you grow them in an allotment or in pots in a small patio garden, there's nothing quite like the great fresh taste of your own fruit and vegetables.

To reflect the resurgence of interest being shown in home-grown food, the special theme for the 2005 Bloom year is 'Grow your Own' and the RHS will present a Grow your Own Discretionary Award to the UK Finalist showing the most innovative way of incorporating the theme into their entry.

Growing your own need not be difficult, as Jim Arbury, Fruit Department Superintendent at RHS Garden Wisley explained, "Soft fruits, like strawberries and raspberries, are an easy way to get started. Strawberry flowers offer good colour to hanging baskets. The potentilla hybrid 'Viva Rosa' has lovely pink flowers and alpine strawberries also make good bedding plants.

"You can make use of walls and fences in gardens to grow crops and with dwarfing rootstocks, small fruit trees can also be grown. Cordons are very useful for growing apples and pears in small gardens. Spur-bearing varieties of apples such as 'Sunset' and 'Falstaff', grow well on this single-stem method."

The diversity of food to be grown in the UK is well demonstrated by Uplands Allotments project in Aston, Birmingham, where crops include asparagus, coriander, grapes, peppers, dhanian, fenugreek and red kidney beans.

An 'authority' on ornamental horticulture

Each year, the RHS Flower Show at Tatton Park wows visitors with stunning floral displays, great shopping opportunities and a whole host of design ideas from specialist nurseries, societies, organisations and garden designers. Amidst the horticultural exhibits and gardening gadgetry, Tatton Park is also home to the RHS National Flower Bed Competition. Open to all local authorities, this is a showcase for some of the finest public floral displays in the UK.

In July 2005, 26 local authority entrants will compete for coveted RHS Medals in the quest for public and professional recognition for the months of designing, planning and growing of their themed bedding displays. As the Official Plant Supplier, floriculturists Ball Colegrave will provide competitors with over 100,000 plugs and seeds.

RHS Show Manager, Kris Hulewicz said, "The RHS National Flower Bed Competition is well established as a way for local authorities to display their skills and create pride and excitement in their local communities. It has become the place for park gardeners to promote their local area."

Last year Scarborough Borough Council received a Gold Medal for the second year running. Roger Burnett, their Parks and Countryside Manager explained, "Our 2004 entry was Whitby's Floral Endeavour to celebrate the Bicentenary of the RHS. It was on the Whitby ship that James Cook sailed to Australia, taking with him the famous plant collector and one of the founders of the RHS, Sir Joseph Banks. Whitby is

one of three key resorts in our area, alongside Filey and Scarborough, so we thought this would be a fitting link."

"Our entry was Council funded but the work was undertaken by Parks Service staff entirely in their own time. We had an excellent response from volunteers who all showed great enthusiasm and team spirit. We shall be recreating the display in Pannet Park, Whitby later this year. For 2005 we'll be consulting with our Bloom group to brainstorm ideas and see how we can continue to encourage innovative feature beds. We find that good quality horticulture enhances the reputation of our resorts on a local and national level, and also offers tremendous learning opportunities amongst employees and the public. Our Volunteers in Parks (V.I.P.s) learn through hands-on clearing, planting and maintenance of our public parks and open spaces. There's no doubt that developing feature beds raises civic pride in the Parks Service, Council and Scarborough area as a whole. It increases awareness of what we are capable of and we not only bring back Awards but stunning floral designs for everyone to enjoy."

If you want to hear more about Scarborough's successes why not attend the special **RHS Seminar on Friday 22 July at Tenants Hall, Tatton Park**. Roger Burnett will be amongst a number of speakers imparting invaluable information on how their local authority approaches

feature floral displays. The main focus of the seminar is the design, planning, growing and benefits of ornamental bedding schemes and three-dimensional horticultural displays. Delegates will benefit from expert advice, case studies, question time and will attend the presentation of the Award for the Best Flower



Bed at the RHS Flower Show at Tatton Park.

For more information about the seminar, please contact Lucy Stanyer on 020 7821 3340 or visit www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom to download an application form.

For full details about the **RHS Flower Show at Tatton Park** please visit the events page at www.rhs.org.uk and follow links to Tatton Park.

RHS Members:

20 - 24 July

RHS Members' Preview Day:
20 July.

Telephone bookings:
0870 906 3810 with your
membership number.

Non-Members:

Public Days: 21 - 24 July.

Telephone bookings:
0870 906 3811.

A Bloom competition to put a spring in your step!

The RHS is giving Bloom Review readers the chance to take part in a special competition. To enter all you have to do is **tell us the name of your favourite UK park or garden with a short explanation** (25 words approx). A lucky winner will be chosen at random and will receive the **fabulous prize of two tickets to an RHS Flower Show of their choice in 2005:**

- Chelsea (24-28 May)
- Hampton Court Palace (5-10 July)
- Tatton Park (20-24 July)
- London (15-16 March, 12-13 April, 13-14 & 17-18 Sept for the Orchid Show, 4-5 Oct, and 15-16 Nov.)
- RHS Spring Flower Show, Cardiff (22-24 April)

Send your entry, together with your name and address to: Bianca Lapins, Bloom Review Spring Competition, Royal Horticultural Society, 80 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PE, or email: biancalapins@rhs.org.uk **The closing date for the competition is 15 April 2005.** Details of the winning entry will be published in the next edition of Bloom Review (Autumn 2005).

RHS Lectures for keen gardeners

The RHS Regional Lecture Programme aims to inspire and educate as many keen gardeners as possible. Each year over fifty RHS lectures are hosted across the UK, and this year, two Bloom groups will be hosting such lectures.

As a subsidised programme of RHS activity, ticket prices are just £4, with a reduced rate of £3 for RHS Individual Members.

Alness in Bloom Spectacular Containers with Staying Power by *Tim Miles*
Wednesday 20 April, 7.30pm
The Averon Leisure Centre, Alness
Tips and advice on creating beautiful pots, baskets, troughs and planters covering plant selection and maintaining displays through the seasons.

Tickets: **Carolyn Wilson**.
Tel: 01349 884812 or email: info@victorianaflorest.co.uk

Durham in Bloom Gardens by Design by *Marilyn Elm*
Thursday 17 November, 7.30pm
Town Hall, Market Place, Durham
Covering the thought and planning required to make an attractive garden looking to the past for examples.

Tickets: **Andrew Jackson**.
Tel: 0191 301 8693 or email: ajackson@durhamcity.gov.uk

For information on the full Regional Lecture Programme and other RHS events you can log on to Event Finder on the RHS website - www.rhs.org.uk - or call 020 7821 3000 for a free copy of the 2005 Events Calendar.

Would you like to know more about Britain in Bloom?

For more information about Britain in Bloom, please contact: **Carolyn O'Callaghan**
Britain in Bloom Co-ordinator
P.O. Box 332, Stockport SK4 2YN

Telephone: 0161 442 4022
Fax: 0161 443 1507
Email: carolyneocallaghan@rhs.org.uk
www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom

... or would you like Bloom Review in another format?

For an alternative format of Bloom Review, please call 020 7821 3006, text phone 18001 020 7834 4333 or email biancalapins@rhs.org.uk

Year-round, 'unannounced judging' for 2005!

As everyone involved with Britain in Bloom already knows, the campaign isn't just about one judging day in the summer, it's actually 365 days' worth of effort.

With the aim of recognising this full year commitment, there will be unannounced judging for the city and town categories with populations of 2,501 and over. In April, UK Finalists within these categories will be visited by judges for assessment, in addition to the summer tour from 1-12 August 2005.



Jim Buttress, Chairman.

Speaking about this new development, Chairman of UK Judges, Jim Buttress said, "Every Bloom Finalist feels justifiably proud of their

entry from January to December. The unannounced judging will be very much in the spirit of the campaign and will give the judges an opportunity to see the city or town for themselves, without the formality of the summer tour."

Whereas the summer tour follows a set route and judges are accompanied by representatives from the entry, the unannounced tour will allow judges to venture off-route and visit anywhere within set perimeters. The judges will be unaccompanied and have the opportunity to assess the year-round quality of horticulture and cleanliness at a different time of year, using a simplified marking checklist. Marks gained over both tours will be combined to arrive at the overall achievement award.

Carolyne O'Callaghan, Britain in Bloom Co-ordinator said, "The process of unannounced judging will bring a new level of consistency to the campaign, ensuring communities maintain a high standard at different times of the year. It will be extremely useful for entries, especially those led by local authorities, in helping to highlight participation in Britain in Bloom as a viable and credible measure of quality."

Neighbourhoods flourish ...



Following the introduction of the RHS Britain in Bloom Neighbourhood Awards in partnership with B&Q, 10 nations/regions throughout the UK are adopting the scheme and gaining the rewards of improved local environments.

One flourishing scheme is the Ravenscliffe Community Garden in Bradford, West Yorkshire, where residents of a housing estate transformed their depressed surroundings into a garden area for everyone to enjoy. Residents Eric and Ann Henderson were the driving force behind the re-development project and as Eric explained, when they started four years ago life in Ravenscliffe could only be improved. "Our estate was so run down; when houses were not re-let, they were bulldozed and left as rubble; cars were being burned out every week and we even had some riots; it was beginning to look like a war zone! As a community we had the choice to either do something to improve

it or we could be re-housed to other estates. We wanted to stay; my neighbours were my friends and my back garden has a great view of open countryside, with lots of wildlife, like squirrels and red deer, and a carpet of bluebells in the spring. We started to realise what we had was special but we weren't looking after it.

"A group of residents got together and said enough is enough, we want a real community. We started with the large traffic island at the entrance to the estate, on the main road from Harrogate into Bradford. It's only distinguishing feature then was a derelict toilet block.

"We approached Bradford Metropolitan City Council and asked them to clear the site and give us for permission to develop it into a community garden. They did that and a team of volunteers from the estate made a start on the garden. After much hard work it is now a 'green' island containing trees, flower beds, permanent planting, paths, seating and fencing. It's used by everyone; from mums having picnics with their children, to elderly residents meeting there to have a chat."

Not content to stop at the traffic island, the residents went on to request a new community centre, with permission to develop the garden surrounding it. The centre

has just recently opened and the planting is underway.

The success of the project has also inspired residents to take positive steps in their individual lives such as enrolling in further study. Several residents have studied childcare and have established a playgroup for local children.

Yorkshire in Bloom judge Patricia Baker toured the Ravenscliffe Estate last summer and she said, "This community garden has made such a difference to the quality of life for people here. Eric and Ann have tremendous enthusiasm and the result of their efforts has been a massive reduction in vandalism in the area. The garden is appreciated and treated with respect.

"The great thing about the Neighbourhood Awards is that they give people the credit they deserve for all their hard work in their local surroundings. It's non-competitive and everyone involved gets a certificate, so hopefully it encourages more people to join in and feel part of the bigger organisation that is Britain in Bloom."

For more information on the Neighbourhood Award Pilot email: carolyneocallaghan@rhs.org.uk or T: 0161 442 4022.



Well done and congratulations to ...

We are delighted to offer our congratulations to some exceptional people who have received high honours for their contribution to the Britain in Bloom campaign.

Doug Stacey was presented with the 2004 Britain in Bloom Outstanding Achievement Award in recognition of his commitment to the Bloom over many years as a national and regional judge and as Chairman of East Midlands in Bloom.

On receiving the Award, Doug said, "It was a complete surprise to me. I was delighted, whilst being conscious that there are so many equally deserving people working so hard all around the

country for the Bloom. It's an amazing organisation and it made me feel quite humble to receive the Award in that context. I have had the chance to meet so many wonderful people that work tirelessly for their communities and I would like to say thanks to them for all their hard work. There is so much teamwork involved and the Bloom really brings out the best in people "

Alness in the Scottish Highlands, received the 2004 Queen's Award and Cllr Carolyn Wilson, Chairman of Alness in Bloom said, "It's a great honour for the town to have received this award and also for our Bloom volunteers to get recognition for the really good job they do all year round. It's



Doug Stacey (right) with Bob Flowerdew

especially nice that we were given this particular Award, since it's presented to a group, not an individual and Alness in Bloom is very much a community effort. We really couldn't do it without our whole team."

Our congratulations also go to Stan Hitt from Bath City Council for his MBE for contribution to public horticulture, and Tom Deane of Ledbury for his MBE for long service to the cause of Ledbury in Bloom.



Crawley go green

As part of a dedicated, year-round strategy to make a cleaner, greener Crawley, activities at Tilgate Park are proving a real focus for environmental education. Attracting over half a million visitors each year, the Park plays a key role in nature conservation, habitat preservation and the promotion of sustainability.

The Tilgate Nature Centre is making a major contribution to conserving and improving biodiversity at a local, national and, increasingly, a global level. Kevin Tidy, Centre Manager said, "In its vital role as a breeding



The xerophytic garden planted with the help of local youngsters.



centre, Tilgate is internationally renowned for its conservation of some of the world's endangered species, including white naped cranes and bald ibis. The centre has had notable success in captive breeding of nationally rare red squirrels with a view to their re-introduction to the wild. It is also an important breeding centre for rare breeds such as white park cattle.

"Visitors can adopt or sponsor animals and learn more about them through special tours,

talks and exhibits. By educating people about the threats to biodiversity we hope to help them understand man's impact on nature and how we can all contribute and improve the situation. The Discovery Room is a particularly popular educational facility, providing interesting, informative details of many species of invertebrates, birds, reptiles and mammals and includes live specimens."

Another area within the Park that is proving highly popular is the GreenZone. This is a mock-up house and garden designed to show ways people can lessen their impact on the environment. Converted from a former tractor shed and depot, the environmentally sensitive structure utilises interactive games and specific displays promoting methods to

incorporate greener living into our daily lives.

Ruth Growney, Crawley in Bloom Co-ordinator explained, "Recycling, waste management, noise pollution, anti-littering, wildlife and conservation are among the key issues showcased in the GreenZone. We are expanding the facility to include a wildlife garden, a recycled garden and a xerophytic garden - that is one in which no water is required - sponsored by Southern Water. Through fun facts and exhibits we promote a serious message about the importance of sustainable living. For example, did you know that in the South East we have less fresh water available than Ethiopia or Sudan, but we use more than any other UK region?"

Christine Aldous, Environmental Projects Officer at Crawley Borough Council added, "The restoration and preservation of our historic landscape, such as broadleaf woodland and heathland, is just another example of the many ways in which we are committed to raising awareness of conservation and sustainability in our area. We are continually working at many levels to promote, educate and implement programmes which will be of direct environmental benefit. We also make available environmental grants to community schemes."



Planting the Recycled Garden



Lacewing and Bee 'Hotel'



Simon Thornton-Wood
(Photo courtesy of Tim Sandall)

UK Finalists Seminar

As mentioned on the front page, Simon Thornton-Wood, RHS Assistant Director for Science & Learning, was a keynote speaker at this year's UK Finalists' Seminar in Derby. Detailing his topic of environmental sustainability, Simon said, "Sustainability is an area that is developing its own culture and language and it's important that we concentrate on making it an action as well.

"There are some principles of sustainability that are readily reflected in what we do as gardeners and we should consider how these may be translated into everything from our planting to the promotion of biodiversity.

"As gardeners we look to control and create order in our environment, but this can be counter-productive. Look at all the consequences of 'tidying up': you may find that some small compromises can benefit the natural world - and thus provide benefit for you in creating a healthy environment. Think small and introduce a little, manageable chaos: it is the marginal effect that allows wildlife to flourish without impinging upon our direct needs in the urban environment.

"There is still a lot we don't know or understand about environmental sustainability. There is a danger in looking for generalised, prescriptive statements of best practice, rather than observing our own neighbourhoods, learning from the experience and knowledge of our local communities, and thinking about the local consequences of changes that we introduce.

"At the RHS, we can suggest a horticultural framework that people can think about for achieving environmental sustainability, looking at everything from plant conservation to the responsible sourcing of plant materials. Working together in the local community, we can both influence entire industries, and see the positive benefits of caring for the world locally."

Parks and Squares Who Cares?

By Deborah Fox, CABE Space

CABE Space has taken the signatories of its Manifesto, some four hundred organisations and two thousand individuals, to the government's Sustainable Communities Summit. The combined membership of the signatories, that includes the Royal Horticultural Society, is four and a half million people. The ten point Manifesto includes points aligned to Britain in Bloom's aims such as encouraging people to give time to improving the local environment, and tasking green space managers to protect and enhance biodiversity in urban green spaces.

The national champion for parks and green spaces polled 1500 of the signatories for their likes and dislikes, which showed that British people value their parks as community assets in the same way they do a good neighbourhood school.

The poll highlighted unsafe and littered green spaces, where there is crime and a lack of park keepers, as some of the main dislikes of the public.

Advice on how to overcome these problems is at hand through a new CABE Space publication. It identifies the link between the quality of parks and user behaviour. Research in 2004 looked into the necessary measures to overcome the 'spiral of decline', where neglected parks suffer an ever increasing effect of crime and vandalism. By following these measures, places can be turned around to reinvigorate communities and the local economy. CABE Space advocates place making over the blanket adoption of 'target hardening' measures that serve to fortify the environment. A policy note was issued at the end of 2004, whilst this guidance seeks to provide more practical advice. Examples in the guidance highlight the benefits of reintroducing the park keeper, returning to original designs to improve safety, and designing in new safety features like welcoming entrances and sight lines.

For information on all of CABE Space's publications visit www.cabespace.org.uk or call enquiries on 0207 960 2400.



Making a clean sweep in Coventry

The cathedral city of Coventry was last year's Britain in Bloom UK Finalist winner in the Urban Regeneration category and also received a Silver Gilt Award. Environmental cleanliness is one aspect of the Coventry in Bloom activity that played a major role in this success.

Roger Bache is Operations Manager of CV One, a private not for profit company that manages the part of Coventry bounded by the ring road, and he says that the company takes a very proactive approach to environmental cleanliness. "Our key priority has been to make the City Centre a cleaner and more attractive place for visitors, by radically improving cleanliness and using landscape and floral decoration to soften a hard environment.

"We introduced the use of pockets computers (PDA's) by our street wardens to score the quality of cleansing in the city centre. With daily monitoring, it's possible to highlight a problem, such as fly-tipping, and quickly deal with it.



"A deep clean of the city was carried out last year and we installed CCTV in all our subways at the same time. We have patrol staff who report back to us whenever any graffiti appears so that it can be dealt with, usually within 24 hours, and our street cleaners have kits so they can treat any they see straight away. If the graffiti is in a private area, the owner is contacted and we will remove it with their permission."

Roger is so confident of their success in dealing with graffiti that he gives visitors to the city the 'Graffiti Challenge' to try and find some. "People do rise to it; I get cheerful calls saying 'I've found some!' It means that we can respond to it quickly but of course it also gives us free monitoring and reporting into the bargain!"

As for every Bloom entry, chewing gum is a big concern, but Roger says that press and public relations has had an impact in dealing with it. "We have been using the media to publish articles urging chewing gum users to dispose of the gum in the many litter bins across the city centre, so the money dedicated to this resource can be used elsewhere in the city."

Media and marketing has also played a large part in promoting Coventry in Bloom as something to be proud of,



as Roger continued, "We use strong imagery of a single white chrysanthemum and the 'Coventry, it's Blooming' slogan on all our marketing material, including posters and banners, to give an easily recognisable identity to the campaign. We've even branded a taxi - and that certainly gets noticed! It's great to have it moving around Coventry spreading the Bloom message to residents and clients picked up from the airport or station."

Roger concluded, "Coventry's success in Britain in Bloom has given residents a real sense of civic pride. The whole community supported our Spring Lifestyle competition that had a gardening theme and involved B&Q as partners. There were 'how to' demonstrations of hanging baskets and flower troughs by B&Q, wedding bouquets, floral prints, a free B&Q raffle and even three live comedy gnomes - well, marketing is after all about trying to do something completely different!"

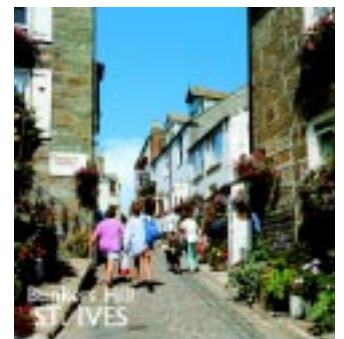
Entente Florale UK entries

The city of Sheffield and the coastal resort of St Ives & Carbis Bay are to represent the UK in this year's international 'Entente Florale' competition.

Brian Hosken, Open Spaces Manager at Penwith District Council, says that the ancient harbour town of St Ives, with its maze of cobbled streets lined with fishermen's cottages together with the popular holiday resort of Carbis Bay, have a lot to offer the judges. "People link visits with the Eden Project and come here to see the beautiful gardens and enjoy the sub tropical planting that our mild,

gulf stream climate allows. Tourists can also visit the Steeplewood Nature Reserve and Tate St Ives, part of the Tate Art Gallery in London. Our entry is all about community involvement; bringing groups together for the benefit of the local people and visitors."

Entente Florale jury member Terry Whitmill will be mentoring the two UK entries. He said, "Entente Florale differs to Britain in Bloom in that it incorporates such elements as tourism, culture and architecture. These elements are weighted equally with horticultural excellence and community.



"Both Sheffield and St Ives are very proud of their heritage and they should aim to promote that aspect. St Ives and Carbis Bay is a small, close-knit community and that is well reflected in its entry, whilst Sheffield has all the attractions of a large city."