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GRASS ROOTS SPECIAL ONLINE

Summer 2014 EXTRA

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RHS BRITAIN IN BLOOM *Celebrating 50 years!*

YOUR STORIES



50 YEARS

RHS BRITAIN IN BLOOM



Sharing the best in Gardening

WELCOME

To our special supplement to *Grass Roots*, the Summer 2014 issue.

In celebration of our Bloom 50th year, we've uploaded this one-off online PDF featuring more of your stories. You've been telling us how you marked the launch of this golden anniversary year and have been keeping us up to date with the wonderful work you do within your communities. Keep sending in your stories to Bloom50@rhs.org.uk.

Cover image: Claire Campbell

Email communities@rhs.org.uk

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The Royal Horticultural Society is the UK's leading gardening charity, dedicated to advancing horticulture and promoting gardening.

Our community campaigns support more than 5,000 groups in creating greener and more interconnected communities. For more information about RHS Britain in Bloom, RHS It's Your Neighbourhood and RHS Affiliated Societies, please visit rhs.org.uk/communities

Bracknell in Bloom



Left: The Mayor of the Borough of Bracknell Forest Cllr Mrs Jan Angell helps Emily, Georgia, Marci and Jaiden plant their sunflowers

Below: Freddie and Charlie planting sunflowers



Bracknell in Bloom launched their 2014 campaign with a family friendly "Growing for Gold" event held at one of Bracknell's popular parks.

Both the town and borough Mayors, Bracknell in Bloom committee members and volunteers from a local It's Your Neighbourhood community partnership helped children get involved with "Growing for Gold" by planting a sunflower seed to take home and carry on growing.

Allan Moffat, Chair of Bracknell in Bloom said: "We wanted to use our RHS free seeds to encourage Bracknell's young people to garden. The children really enjoyed planting their sunflowers and who knows, one planted at the launch may win our annual tallest sunflower competition!"

There were lots of other activities to do

including a hunt for animal pictures hidden around the park. This was extremely popular with over 200 children claiming their prize of a chocolate Easter egg. Those that attended were also able to enjoy free face painting, a pocket money stall, tombola and were able to buy plants and homemade chutneys.

Bracknell in Bloom

Right:

The Lulworth and District Garden Society sowed sunflower seeds as part of the 'Growing for Gold' launch in April. The five members involved represented the Church, the School, the Village Hall and the Garden Society. The plants are to be placed in the grounds of the school, the two churchyards and the Village Hall gardens.



Acocks Green Village in Bloom

Like most suburbs of a large city, we have the usual problems thrown at us – litter, including lots of cigarette butts, graffiti, not to mention nature’s weeds and the stealing of plants.

We know that Britain in Bloom is an excellent vehicle to use to remedy the situation. By adhering to the criteria laid down, dwelling on ‘pride of place,’ community spirit and topping it all off with enhancing by planting, we feel we are turning the situation around.

Recently launching our campaign for 2014, we created a Community Orchard from a dumped on, derelict piece of land slap bang in the middle of two blocks of shops. We wanted to bring the country into the city to give a more gentle feel to our residents’ busy lives. We had a bee keeper, plant sales and hand made crafts featuring jewellery with floral designs, pottery and beeswax candles.

Many people came along including lots of children, even some from the 260th Scout Group. We launched a children’s poster competition and the tallest sunflower competition.

James, one of the managers from the local Wetherspoon’s public house Spread Eagle,



Above: Pupils from Cottesbrooke school building a bug hotel

came along and dispensed coffee and soft drinks. We were also supported by our local councillors and our MP.

Leading up to the launch, we built a bug hotel with pupils from Cottesbrooke school

who helped us to fill it up with materials for many creatures to make their home

Fran Lee, Acocks Green Village in Bloom.

Netherfield It’s Your Neighbourhood Group



The issue of heavy littering and fly tipping was a major concern for many people living in the Milton Keynes estate of Netherfield. Community Action:MK supported a core group of volunteers to meet with Milton Keynes Council and agree a joint working arrangement where volunteers would patrol

the local area and report incidents of fly tipping directly to the Council Team. The group started to see slow but steady progress.

Many local groups took part in a recycling initiative in Netherfield involving volunteers asking their friends and neighbours to pledge to recycle something they did not already. The project successfully increased recycling in the estate. As part of the project the local Resident’s Association ran a fun day including a ‘swap shop’ asking local people to come and swap their unwanted furniture rather than dump it on the streets.

Community Action:MK supported community members to identify a local ‘grot spot’ (a specific area that they did not like and would like to see improved). They chose an area with a large amount of fly tipping, graffiti and litter that children walk past on their route to school. Working in partnership with Langland School in Netherfield

Community Action:MK supported a group of 10/11 year olds to form an environment group that reported the issues, got the area cleaned up and ran an assembly promoting environmental responsibility to their fellow students. They are now writing to parents to involve them in regular community litter picks.

Woughton Community Council and adult volunteers joined forces with Langland School with support from Community Action:MK to initiate a community allotment at the school. The allotment is flourishing and the interest from students to get involved and grow their own is huge. The adult volunteers have since gone on to begin planting flowers and seeds in the ‘grot spot’ and hope to gather more interest and volunteer support from residents as the positivity around the changes spreads. *Julie Webb, Netherfield It’s Your Neighbourhood Group*



Left:
The Edgar
Sewter School
'Growing For It'
Group

Below:
Halesworth
in Bloom
fundraising event

Halesworth in Bloom

It all started way back in 2007 in our pedestrian thoroughfare with some weedy planters that no one was caring for. I got together with our local Gardeners Society and we planted them up with colourful annuals. People started to notice us particularly when we were weeding and watering. Some of our Halesworth Councilors and even the Town Clerk got involved and asked me if we could go in for Anglia in Bloom. I was very sceptical as it would be a lot of work!

Last year, 2013, we entered Anglia in Bloom for the first time with great trepidation, hoping we might possibly get an encouraging constructive comment from the judges. To our enormous surprise we were given a silver gilt award and best new entry! Our local school gardening group won the best under 12 years award with our rare tree conservation project and the local thoroughfare and businesses joint effort, helping earn us two Special Award Certificates! We were so excited, amazed and proud. The children who represented the Edgar Sewter School 'Growing For It' Group were thrilled at going up several times at the awards ceremony to shake the Judges hands and came back waving their certificates and trophies.

This year we found everyone at our annual Parish Meeting knew what we were doing. We now have over 100 people involved in different projects. Halesworth in Bloom, as we call it, has joined us all together as a whole vibrant community who are beginning to feel so proud of our small town instead of thinking we were the drab country cousins to our previously more popular seaside neighbours. We are working really, really hard.

We have also learnt lots for our latest venture celebrating famous past residents William Jackson Hooker and his son Joseph Dalton Hooker, Directors of Kew Gardens for nearly half a century. Other projects include our stunning Millennium Green, the U3A Technology Group's computer assisted watering scheme, Woottens drought-resistant, bee-friendly roundabouts, our

Mencap Garden and the housebounders gift scheme with Halesworth Volunteers to mention just a few. It would be so great to get gold but our real aspiration is a joyful, beautiful and eco-friendly town.

Tamsyn Imison, Halesworth in Bloom



Moor Nook Community Allotments

Moor Nook estate is located in the Ribbleton ward of East Preston and is within the 10 % most deprived wards in England.

Moor Nook Estate Management Board are a community led organisation providing opportunities for involvement for local residents and their families. In 2009 a number of community members expressed an interest in gardening locally, but with a waiting list of three and a half years at the nearest allotment site, felt that something needed to be done to provide them with their own allotment site closer to home. They identified an old garage site in the heart of the estate, which was sky high with weeds, brambles and fly-tipping, and was used as a rat run for people escaping from the police.

The community members enlisted the help of a number of different organisations to



assist them in their aim to turn this site into community allotments. Community Payback (probation service) came and cleared the site and built 19 raised beds free of charge. They also used old materials they found on site to build a herb spiral, and also assisted in building a composting area too.

Over the past four years the site has developed into a real community hub, now with 19 individual plot holders who look after their own area but also contribute to the maintenance of the communal areas too. Lancashire Wildlife Trust and The Conservation Volunteers have provided ongoing expert advice and support.

Radio Lancashire have broadcast their Sunday afternoon show with Stephen Lowe live from the site and also, more recently, Sally Naden came down to the Community Allotments Open Day and again broadcast live from the site. The plot holders also achieved an It's Your Neighbourhood Level 5 Outstanding at North West in Bloom in 2012.

Jenn Impett, Moor Nook Community Allotments

A Golden Morning at Moorsholm Village

Half term at Moorsholm Village saw Moorsholm in Bloom team hosting our Little Planters activity morning at the community garden. Our theme for the event was the RHS 50th anniversary year. To mark the occasion we decided to make "Roy" and "Al" our celebration scarecrows. Children and adults joined in enthusiastically and after much scattering of straw, the scarecrows were dressed and ready to go. We also planted their "Golden Wheelbarrow" which will, hopefully, give a lovely display of

yellow toned plants which are colourful and beneficial to pollinators.

We opened our Pollinators Pantry, a fun way to educate children as to what plants to grow for bees and other insects. The sun came out for our photo call with the local press so, all in all, a golden morning was had by all.

Barbara Cartwright, Moorsholm in Bloom



Hutton Cranswick in Bloom

This is a hugely important year for Yorkshire – not only has Hull been appointed the next City of Culture (2017), but the prestigious Tour de France will enjoy its “Grand Depart” from Leeds on 5th July.

We are doing our bit here in East Yorkshire to respond to appeals to “paint the canvas of Yorkshire yellow” for the duration of the local stages of this Race, by garlanding our cycle sculptures with golden ribbons and bows. These features came into being through the advent of the Way of the Roses (169 mile) coast to coast cycle route in September 2010. This placed Hutton Cranswick firmly on the UK cycling map. Our village is also included on the 146 mile circular Yorkshire Wolds Cycle Route which passes through 47 East Riding towns and villages.

In March 2012, pursuing an innovative idea from one of our Village in Bloom members and a local Ranger with Sustrans (the developers of the new route), an appeal was placed in our monthly Bulletin asking for donations of old bicycles to create floral features which would welcome cyclists to our village from either direction. The bicycles are underplanted with red and white roses to symbolise the counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire. Initially painted black, these donated cycles underwent a blue repaint (to replicate the route sign colour) in 2013. This year the sculptures have been further

improved with timber edging, a gravel surround and permanent welcome signs. Since the inception of these routes cyclist numbers have risen dramatically bringing an increasing number of welcome visitors to this corner of the country.

Pictured above is one of the two current cycle sculptures garlanded in yellow, being admired by our mascot – Crawford the Cranswick Crane, who will be advertising the RHS Golden Anniversary of Britain in Bloom. Crawford, constructed wholly of re-cycled material, helped us celebrate our entry into the Britain in Bloom UK Finals in 2012. The reasoning behind his creation is that the name Cranswick (in Old English “Cranuc Wic”) means “crane inhabited homestead”, and we felt we needed a mascot to highlight our National entry that year.

From the village’s first entry into Yorkshire in Bloom almost 20 years ago, we’ve enjoyed an excellent “backdrop” for our planting endeavours – a naturally attractive rural location with a large Village Green and Pond and an abundance of pleasant leafy lanes. Over the years we have tried to complement these features by developing appropriate planting in public areas supplemented by attractive displays in barrels, old sinks, hayracks, refurbished animal feed troughs and discarded wheelbarrows.

The years rolled by, planting ambitions

grew, the in Bloom group expanded and we developed links with local businesses, youth groups, our school, residential home, other village societies and even the local rail operator. This support has been reflected in ongoing success, and a huge sense of community involvement and pride in our village.

Year by year we try to increase residents’ awareness of the environment and



Above: Daffodils, planted by volunteers over

the importance of sustainable, visual improvements to our surroundings. We have endeavoured to take part in RHS campaigns such as "Edible Britain" in 2013 and "Growing for Gold" in 2014. Pictured below are the swathes of daffodils, planted by volunteers over many years, which enhance our village entrances and green in Springtime.

The RHS theme of "Growing for Gold" this year will be developed by extensive displays of sunflowers planted by local children and by sustainable golden planting in specific areas with the addition of a number of new gold-themed hanging baskets.

With spring judging now past, our in Bloom team is looking forward to a good growing season in which to develop interesting new displays and hopefully emulate the achievement of last year's Yorkshire in Bloom Gold Rose Award.

Gina Simpson, Hutton Cranswick in Bloom



Friends of the Barnhill Rock Garden



As part of National Gardening Week, Friends of the Barnhill Rock Garden carried out a Spring-clean at the Garden on Saturday, 19th April. This year, apart from tidying/weeding areas of the garden for which they are responsible the Friends planted nearly 1000 snowdrops in the Snowdrop Wood and sunflower seeds in a bed beside the railway to celebrate "50 years of RHS Britain in Bloom",

along with community groups around the country. Helping the Friends with these activities were Cub Scouts from 1st Monifieth Group who also carried out a "litter-pick" across the Garden. This Group have been coming to the Garden for five years now to assist with the Spring-clean.

Friends of the Barnhill Rock Garden

Cumbernauld Environmental Society

Last year the town of Cumbernauld picked up the 'Best Small City' trophy at the Beautiful Scotland awards. This fantastic achievement has made a huge difference to our town. Having, on two separate occasions, been awarded the 'Carbuncle', a title annually bestowed on the one town in Scotland believed to be 'the worst', Beautiful Scotland has shown people all over Scotland that Cumbernauld is a great place to live, work, and visit. After last year's trophy win, which saw the Cumbernauld entry come home with Beautiful Scotland silverware for the first time ever, local and national headlines were made declaring Cumbernauld's transition from Carbuncle to Beautiful; and the award win was commended with a motion in the Scottish

Parliament. Cumbernauld has entered this year's Beautiful Scotland competition and hopes to retain their illustrious title. The Cumbernauld entry is planned and delivered by Cumbernauld Environmental Society, an RHS Affiliated Society. Adam Smith, Cumbernauld Environmental Society



any years





27th Norwich Rainbows



Slopefield Allotment Association



Bury St Edmunds in Bloom



Portree High School, Isle of Skye



Trowbridge in Bloom



Caistor brownies

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