

From the Chairman...

Welcome to the Autumn newsletter from East Midlands in Bloom, with news from entrants, the forthcoming year's campaign and how EMiB representatives fared at in the National Britain in Bloom campaign in 2009.

We had a wonderful year in 2009, with a significant increase in entrants to the main campaign, growth in all the 'Specials' – with the Schools being particularly successful – and a dramatic increase in the Neighbourhoods category. I hope we are able to build further on this splendid base, so we look forward to more of everything in 2010!!

Please look out for the changes to Neighbourhoods for 2010; the name change (to 'It's Your Neighbourhood') is but the start, a big improvement and one for which our Regional Secretary Irene is responsible. Judging criteria have been simplified and linked directly to the revised Bloom criteria and make it much easier for all to understand the benefits of taking part and how to improve and develop.

Changes are also in hand for the Children's Painting Competition – a new entry form will have all the details – which include a class for digital photographs to reflect the changing world we live in. There will also be a guidance booklet for schools gardens, to enable the teachers and children to fully understand what the judges are hoping to see.

As you hopefully know we are holding a half-day workshop on 17th February 2010 for new and recent entrants and we look forward to seeing new groups at Rosliston Village Hall on the morning. Please complete the attendance form or contact Irene for further details.

We will have an EMiB 'Champion of Champions' Category again in 2010, to give an extra stimulus to that select band of communities who have achieved consecutive Gold Medal Certificates.

Finally may I wish you all another excellent gardening year and wish more success for Market Bosworth, Long Sutton, Northampton, Spondon and Mablethorpe in Britain in Bloom.

Jeff Bates

Chairman, East Midlands in Bloom



2010 EMIB DIARY DATES

- Fri Feb 5th** Closing date for New Entrants Workshop/AGM reply slips
- Wed Feb 17th** 10.30 am New Entrants Workshop at Rosliston Village Hall, Main Street, Rosliston, Derbyshire DE12 8JW, followed by AGM at approximately 2.00 pm.
- Fri April 30th** Closing date for receipt of entry forms for EMIB Entries, "It's Your Neighbourhood " and EMiB Special Awards*
- Tues June 1st** Closing date for EMIB Children's Painting Competition
- Mon July 5th to Fri July 16th** **EMIB Judging Period**
- Wed Sept 15th** EMIB Awards Presentation at Northampton Guildhall
- Wed Sept 22nd** "It's Your Neighbourhood" Awards at Nottingham Council House

2010 NEW ENTRANTS WORKSHOP

17th February, Rosliston, Derbyshire

All entrants and anyone who is interested in the 'Bloom' Campaign are encouraged to attend this year's New Entrants Workshop which will be concentrating on the relaunch of the Neighbourhood Awards, now called "It's Your Neighbourhood" as well as giving hints and tips on how to start or improve your existing 'Bloom' entry. It will be held at Rosliston Village Hall, Main Street, Rosliston, Derbyshire DE12 8JW. Registration is from 10.00 am for 10.30 am start. It is expected to conclude at approximately 1.00 pm followed by a buffet lunch. We will also prioritise means of improving school participation and successful school gardening projects.

There is no obligation to enter the competition by attending this event which is always an excellent way for delegates to share each other's experiences and an opportunity for you to speak with judges and experienced entrants.

The cost is £10 per person, so to ensure your place/s, please return completed reply slip which is enclosed with this newsletter by **Friday February 5th** to EMiB Secretary Irene Bates* (see address below), or download a form from our website: www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk

AGM

This will start after lunch at approximately 2.00 pm. Each Community that entered the EMIB Competition in 2009 is entitled to have one representative attend the AGM. Any nominations for the executive committee must be received by Martin Latimer not less than 14 days before (i.e. Wednesday 3rd February 2010) the AGM. Please write with your nomination/s to:

Mr. Martin Latimer, EMiB Vice Chairman,
Woodside Cottage,
21 Woodside, Morley, Derbyshire DE7 6DG.

Please also inform Irene Bates, if attending, by **Friday 5th February**.

***Irene Bates, East Midlands in Bloom Secretary**
64 Chaddesden Park Road, Derby DE21 6HD

Left: Our Britain in Bloom winners - see page 2

Local Roots – 2010 RHS Britain in Bloom Theme

*This has been brought over from 2008/09 and is the theme held for 2010. It is awarded to the community that best encourages activities and links between their unique local history or cultural diversity within their community and demonstrates this through Bloom community activities, planting styles and themes. It will be the **final year** that you can get involved in this theme – so make the most of it!*

At national level congratulations are offered to the following for their outstanding achievements in 2009:

- **Rosliston** Silver Gilt
- **Oakham** Gold
- **Cleethorpes** Gold and Category winner
-

They received their well deserved awards at the National Awards Ceremony held in Torbay on 23rd September from Toby Buckland of BBC's 'Gardeners World'.

Although we were only allowed to nominate 3 entries this year (due to the lower number of entries in 2008 in our region) we believe the standard was higher than ever and we can all bask in their (and our) continued success!

I am happy to say that we had an increase in entries in 2009 and we are therefore able to nominate the following to represent East Midlands in Bloom in 2010:

- Market Bosworth Large Village
- Long Sutton Small Town
- Northampton City
- Spondon Urban Community
- Mablethorpe Small Coastal

They go forward with our hopes for a great 2010 and we will offer as much guidance and support as possible to them and to you all over the coming months.

All in all, another superb year for East Midlands in Bloom, and entirely due to the supreme efforts of yourselves, our dedicated entrants and supporters.

Jeff Bates,

Chairman, East Midlands in Bloom

A few weeks ago I was asked by Irene Bates, secretary of East Midlands in Bloom, to write a 500 word article to go in this year's East Midlands in Bloom newsletter.

Being chairman of the Gold Award winning Grimsby in Bloom committee, she thought that it might make interesting reading for you all if I tried to explain how we've taken the town and port of Great Grimsby in North East Lincolnshire, from a bloomless, standing start, through to this year's first time entry into the East Midlands in Bloom regional competition and our recent, astonishing first time success, winning a Gold Award and coming top of our category, enabling the good people of Great Grimsby to proudly proclaim themselves to be living in the 'Best Small City in the East Midlands', but that alone would take up a good deal more than just 500 words.

I could probably go on for at least 500 words, just telling you about how our hardworking committee have managed, against all odds to galvanise a whole town, successfully gaining 47 points out of 50 for community participation and winning many, many new friends while building strong foundations for future growth along the way.

I could use up at least 500 words eulogising about the importance of being community led yet still working in har-

monious partnership with local businesses such as Freshney Place Shopping Centre, our largest financial sponsor to date and with the local authority North East Lincolnshire Council who, along with their financial support have managed to create some of the most interesting and colourful roundabouts and municipal bedding displays that I have seen anywhere in the whole country.

But, probably the most useful employment of my words would be if I directed you towards our web site where you'll be able to find out exactly what has happened to Grimsby in Bloom through every step in our journey during the last 1 ½ years. With videos, picture galleries and even an online Grimsby in Bloom shop this website has everything you'll need to know about our Gold Award winning team.

www.grimsbyinbloom.com has been online for 18 months now and also proudly features a weekly 'Bloom Blog' published in LIFE, our local free distribution newspaper and sister paper of the Grimsby Telegraph another of our supporters, which gives you up to the minute details of what we're up to in Great Grimsby in a living, ever growing, 38,000 word diary of epic proportions.

It might be that we're giving you a little bit too much information and you might end up trying some of our innovative ideas for yourselves, but that's not a bad thing if it improves the built environment for more towns and villages throughout the UK. Imitation is indeed the greatest form of flattery, so if anyone wants any help or advice on any of this year's Grimsby in Bloom community building schemes please don't hesitate, get in touch and we'll do our best to help.

Ernie Brown
Chairman, Grimsby in Bloom

grimsbyinbloom@btinternet.com
www.grimsbyinbloom.com

Gold Award Winning Grimsby in Bloom
'Best Small City in the East Midlands 2009'
Sowing the seeds for a greater Grimsby



*Left and below,
examples of
Grimsby's
'Blooming'
initiatives*



That elusive GOLD!

Long Sutton in Bloom began 18 years ago, and looking back we were so naïve and really pathetic. I am amazed that we didn't give up and throw in the towel there and then.

This small fenland town does not have the advantage of many things - beautiful architecture, surrounding scenery or parks department. Our main strength is that we are enthusiastic volunteers whose aim is to make our town an attractive place for both local residents and visitors.

Over the years we have taken on board East Midlands in Bloom judges comments, and learned from our many mistakes what works well for us. Being volunteers and growing our own plants we can keep costs down enabling the local traders to be able to afford the leasing charge for a display.

Long Sutton in Bloom has enjoyed success over the years achieving first place quite a few times. After the medal grading system began we were still highly placed but only with silver-gilt, always just a few marks short of that elusive gold! We have always said that the prize is not as important as knowing that Long Sutton people are pleased with what we do, BUT when you are a whisker away you really want to have gold.

After winning with silver-gilt in 2008 the press picked up on my remark "Next year we go for gold". A local firm offered to help us in any way it could. We accepted this offer and between Long Sutton in Bloom, a talented amateur photographer, the local art club and the graphics department of our sponsor we produced a booklet distributed free in Long Sutton. This really raised our profile. A lot of local people thought that the Bloom was done by the council. The booklet didn't just show the pretty pictures, but explained that we were volunteers and showed pictures of us getting down, wet and dirty.

I believe this encouraged more people to make the extra effort and literally "do their bit". The Civic Trust Society embarked on a project of installing window murals on a run down empty hotel in the town centre. These murals covered the broken windows and portrayed every day life as it would have been seen through the windows 30 years ago. With our window boxes in place this whole building became an asset rather than an embarrassment. On judging day we also took risks and showed the judges works in progress, like the new eco-houses, not yet occupied and still a building site, but with amazing allotment like gardens already becoming established.

In my opinion some of our floral displays were not as good this year as they have been in previous years. This seems to prove that other schemes such as the allotments, re-claiming grot-spots for a community access garden, school involvement with wild life and eco projects, encouraging other groups to independently do something, are equally or more important, and show that the whole community really cares. Now the whole community can feel justly proud to have achieved that gold at last. The only worry is where do we go from here.....?

Kay Jenkinson,
Chair Long Sutton in Bloom. 20th October 2009

How Long Sutton in Bloom resolved a 'grot spot'...



The Bull before...



and after, including the murals (see below)



Our story so far...

Many times I have been asked, "How did it all start?" So here I can give you all a little insight into what it was like to start The Sapcote Bloom Group.

I had noticed for the last few years as I travelled through various villages how beautiful their hanging baskets were and how it enhanced the loveliness of the area. I wondered, could I do the same? From always having an interest in flowers and being very aware of the atmosphere they could create I wanted to start something for our village.

My first port of call was to our local Parish Council Clerk Mr Guntrip for advice, he was very supportive, and he gave me much needed encouragement with lots of contact numbers so I could really get the ball rolling. He said if I could get together 6 passionate volunteers with an outline of what we would like to do, I could present it at the next Parish Council Meeting. With this in mind I promptly advertised in our local newspaper and approached local businesses for funding. Our plans for Spring/Summer 2009 were very simple, to brighten up the village.

The group began gathering essential information and useful contacts to try and take our plans further. We contacted Irene Bates the East Midlands In Bloom Coordinator who gave us the numbers for people like Amberol, local councils and other well established bloom groups such as Market Bosworth who were wonderful in the advice they gave to us at this very early stage.

In February 2009 we saw the very first meeting of "The Sapcote Bloom Group". We now had the funding from a generous contribution from a local business and from the Parish Council. Sapcote Garden Centre donated plants and bulbs, also we had ordered baskets for the lampposts so everything was developing well.

The group actively promoted the bloom project by making presentations to local community groups, joining in fund-raising events and also taking advantage of our local community correspondent with updates in our local and village newspaper.

March 2009 brought the arrival of the new village heritage sign, organised and erected by the Heritage Group. It made a starting place for us to begin planting. It also brought together a chance meeting of friends who also felt passionate about the 'bloom project'. Thus strengthening the group.

The response that we have had has been phenomenal, throughout the village there has been additional hanging baskets being put up by residents and everyone was entering into the spirit of it.

After attending the EMIB seminar at Bosworth Hall we decided to enter into the Neighbourhood Awards, some of our members were unsure of this because we had only just started the project, so we asked John Bunkle a Britain in Bloom judge to make a visit to our village and give us some advice. Which turned out to be invaluable. We decided to enter and started to prepare our village for the judgment day on the 8th July.



Sapcote Bloomers at work.....

Watering and caring for the flowers is rewarding and hard work but at the same time fun and relaxing, with new friendships being made and community groups joining in. The village was looking pretty and there is a growing sense of pride. A comment by a resident in the local newspaper reads, "The village is looking better than it has ever done in the 35 years I've lived here." Another comment "The flowers are a joy to behold".

Our village received a neighbourhood award of 'outstanding achievement' at the awards ceremony in Nottingham. We are still on cloud nine, the award is a result of people's hard work and getting together to make a difference.

If your thinking about starting a bloom group my advice would be, seek advice, expertise and knowledge from Britain in Bloom co-ordinators, gain support from your Parish Council, use the advice and expertise of the District and County councillors. Make use of the Internet. Above all involve the community.

What has been written here in this article is only the bud the flowers still bloom in Sapcote.

Sapcote Bloom Group, November 2009

Sapcote Bloomers receiving their gold award at the Presentation of Awards in Nottingham on September 11th



Northampton In Bloom

Receiving a Silver Gilt Award and EMIB City category win in 2008 was no small achievement for Northampton but it wasn't enough for our dedicated Community Groups and Parks/Open Spaces team at the Borough Council. We had a Gold Award in our sights for 2009 and were over the moon when we heard the news that our goal had been reached.

Planning started earlier than usual with particular attention given to the revised judging criteria. The content of our entry was considered right from the beginning and work began on elements like permanent landscaping and designs of the floral displays. Northampton is well known for its many large and stunning urban parks so these and the city centre were significant areas to get prepared. Working alongside companies and people in Northampton was most important to us. So residential and business gardens as well as community initiatives were all included in our submission.

Applications were submitted for all four Special Awards and we also had our first entry in the Neighbourhood Awards from the residents of Spring Boroughs. All year round projects played an important part of our entry including new/refurbished street furniture in the town centre, the creation of a new Rose Garden at Abington Park and schools working hard at Bradlaugh Fields.

Judging day arrived and the judges were officially welcomed at the Guildhall by the Mayor of Northampton and following a quick cup of tea and photographs for the local media the tour commenced. We felt very lucky to have the sun shining as we walked round the city centre and then stopped to see many bright and beautiful parks, gardens and residential areas with fine displays, shrubs and hanging baskets.



Delapre Park – Northampton 2009

The Awards Ceremony was eagerly anticipated and Cleethorpes did not disappoint. The whole event was superbly organised, a credit to all involved with high standards for Northampton to follow in 2010. We came away hosting next year's ceremony, a Gold Award and winners in the City category. The results for Northampton mirrored the day in Lincolnshire – just perfect! Also, Brad-

laugh Fields won the Countryside Companions Trophy plus certificate for Best Wildflower/ Conservation Area and St Andrews Hospital won a Judges Award for their grounds. To say all at Northampton were thrilled was an understatement because the good news did not finish there.

A community group from the Spring Boroughs area were awarded a certificate at the Neighbourhood Awards Ceremony. Nevertheless, the crowning glory came when EMIB confirmed Northampton as one of the East Midlands' nominations into the 2010 Britain In Bloom Competition.

So all in all it was a brilliant year for Northampton with success only emerging from the dedication, enthusiasm and commitment of everybody involved. Thanks really must go to all the community and volunteer groups, businesses, and schools for working together and supporting council staff to achieve the best possible result for Northampton.

Looking ahead to our next challenge, we know it's going to be a very busy year for us but it won't surprise you to know we've already started work! With many people already excited, including our local media, we have started our 2010 Bloom campaign. If every person in Northampton planted only one flower there would be over 200,000 bursts of colour for everyone to see – we are so proud about our national nomination and are looking forward to what we can all achieve together.

Councillor Trini Crake

Chair, Northampton In Bloom

Nottingham Neighbourhoods burst into Bloom

Nottingham took stock this year and returned to grass roots. After winning the national and regional 'Champion of Champions' titles in 2008, it was decided not to enter Bloom as a city this year but to focus on the neighbourhoods.

In 2007, the city had four entrants into the Neighbourhood Awards, all of them from The Meadows. We knew there were many other people round the city busy in their own neighbourhoods, and we aimed to increase our number of entrants to 30 to reflect all the work that was going on.

So, we held a seminar at Central Library to see who might be interested. With the help of inspirational speakers from Pride in The Meadows, interest began to grow. We publicised the Neighbourhood Bloom initiative in the City Council magazine and local newspapers, and asked Neighbourhood Action Officers to seek out potential Bloomers. In the end we found ourselves with an amazing 90 blooming neighbourhoods, from streets and sheltered housing complexes to churches, community gardens and shopping parades. Some activities had been going on for several years; others sprang from a spark of an idea that just needed nurturing, and others were swept along by

the enthusiasm that was spreading round the city.

We delivered to every group a bespoke 'starter kit' of their choice, which could include compost, bedding plants, trees, shrubs, herbs, strawberries, salad plants, hanging basket kits and tubs. Many groups organised community planting days and told us they were getting to know their neighbours for the first time; lots said there was a new sense of pride in the area. Several groups succeeded in gaining great publicity, too.

Some groups suffered vandalism - but very few gave up. Several decided not to go forward for judging this year as they had made limited progress, but in the end, a total of 80 Nottingham groups were assessed by the busy team of judges from East Midlands in Bloom.

At the presentation event at the Council House in Nottingham, we were delighted to discover that ten Nottingham groups had gained Outstanding Achievement Awards, 45 had gained Merits and 25 had gained Improvement Awards.

Our garden competition traditionally includes a prize for Best Community Project, sponsored by Gala Coral, and the award went this year to the Neighbourhood that had scored the highest marks. That was St Stephen's with St Paul's Church and the The Vine Community Centre in Hyson Green – a project to bring new life to a courtyard – which scored 187 marks out of 200. It involved many of the groups that meet at the centre – people of all ages and cultures, working with landscape architect Diane Moore to make a floral oasis that could be used for social occasions, an area for children to play, or just as a quiet place for reflection. The judge admired the colourful floral and mosaic displays depicting the different cultural beliefs. The group proudly received the Erica Beardsmore Trophy as well as a nesting box with commemorative plaque and a £150 voucher.

Young Basford Bloomers below



his project is one of several featured on a DVD produced by Nottingham in Bloom in conjunction with East Midlands in Bloom and the Royal Horticultural Society to inspire more communities to take part in the Neighbour-

hood Awards in the future. Certainly in Nottingham, we have more groups ready to bloom in the future. As we've always said, it's contagious!

Julie Walker Nottingham in Bloom



'Blooming' Barnsley Terrace!

It's Your Neighbourhood (formerly Neighbourhood Awards)

Current Neighbourhood Awards participants and all potential new Neighbourhood groups are invited to join in the newly renamed "It's Your Neighbourhood" campaign. This is the updated campaign which is being launched by the RHS in 2010, initially with press coverage on 24th March and then followed by regional/nationwide events on 27th-28th March (see below) to which all 'Bloom' and 'Neighbourhood' entrants are invited to participate.

Briefly, "It's Your Neighbourhood" is a non-competitive and fun way to encourage your community group, whether from a street (or part of one), streets or any other cleaning up/greening up projects that are aimed at improving your area. All you need to register for this campaign is to download and complete an entry form from our website: www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk

You can receive a guidance visit from one of our assessors which will be followed up by an assessment of how far you have achieved your objectives, during a date in July. You will then be allocated an award which will be presented at the "It's Your Neighbourhood" Awards Presentation held in September.

The assessment of this campaign will now be split into three core pillars which are:

- Community Participation (40% of total points)
- Environmental Responsibility (30% of total points)
- Gardening Achievement (30% of total points)

Please refer to our website for further guidelines or visit: www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom/GardeningInMyCommunity/Gardening_in_my_Community.html.

In addition, you also have access to the RHS's team of gardening experts; simply send an e-mail with your question to: advice@rhs.org.uk but please ensure you put **BiBNA** in the subject line as this is a service normally reserved for

RHS members. There may also be a Bloom group in your area which could offer you advice and support (please contact Irene for details).

***Britain in Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood Launch Event 27 & 28 March 2010**

You are INVITED to participate in the UK-wide LAUNCH of Britain in Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood (formerly Neighbourhood Awards).

The RHS general concept chosen to shape the event around is "mass greening / creating a river of green" across the UK so the idea is that launch events would be centred around planting. We are hoping this will capture the press attention particularly because this can be linked into the fact that 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity.

The RHS will be organising a press launch a few days before the local events to announce this is happening and start generating the media buzz. In partnership with a local group, the RHS will stage a "greening event" which the press would be invited to attend.

As many groups as possible within the East Midlands region are invited to hold launch events on the designated weekend so that not only can BiB generate some press coverage before the event but also after the event by reporting on how many plants were planted etc. In order to maximise the potential for press coverage we would need each group participating to "register" their event with BiB; this would be a simple matter of telling us the date, time and location of their event and providing a brief description of what you will be doing on the day. (Details of how to register will be circulated early in the New Year.)

In addition to organising the press launch, the RHS is creating support materials for all groups – finalists, region/nation in Bloom participants, Neighbourhoods – who organise a launch event on the designated dates. The support packs will include suggested ideas of what you can do on the day, general information about biodiversity, template press releases, template promotional materials (to which your event details can be added) etc.

Additional Information:

If you have any questions please contact the RHS Communities team on **020 7821 3689** or the RHS Communities Press Office **020 7821 3044** or by e-mailing **stephanieeynon@rhs.org.uk** or **georginawebb@rhs.org.uk**

Right: Residents of 'Albert Avenue Alive'



ADVERTISEMENT

November 2009 Press Release:

Britain's most environmentally effective high street flower planter

Following two seasons of trials with both Birmingham and Nottingham city councils, the most environmentally effective high street flower planter is now being launched nationally.

Amberol from Alfreton in Derbyshire pioneered the use of self-watering planters and containers for use by local authorities and now, in their 40th year, they believe their Aquafeed system is the best on the market.

"We have trialed our Aquafeed system for two years and the results from these two city councils are simply brilliant," said John Williamson, Amberol's head of marketing.

The Aquafeed system uses a series of highly absorbent wicks that draw water up from a built-in reservoir onto a capillary matting pad that disperses water evenly throughout the compost, ensuring even and constant moisture to prolong flowering, reduce maintenance and save precious water.

Changes in UK weather patterns are likely to mean that summers are becoming drier but interspersed with a combination of torrential rain and high wind. These three factors can create horrendous growing conditions for container plants.

City Councils in Birmingham and Nottingham have been using Amberol's Aquafeed planters and hanging baskets over a two-year period, both are impressed with the results.

Gary McManus, Birmingham City Council's floral enhancement manager, said: "Amberol's Aquafeed system provides excellent labour and water saving benefits. Watering has been reduced to three times a week during the summer months showing a substantial saving in both labour and water."

Glenn Springthorpe, Nottingham City Council's nursery manager, said: "The containers are used throughout the city. We have experienced fantastic labour saving benefits. For example, the traditional hanging baskets, which the council has used in the past, needed watering daily. The Aquafeed system allows plants to draw however much water they need, meaning staff only need to re-fill the reservoir every few days."

"Everyone in the public sector has to demonstrate clear environmental credentials and strict budgetary controls. Almost every local authority has street planters of some form and our trials with Birmingham and Nottingham clearly show that Aquafeed produces astonishing results that meet both of these criteria," says John Williamson. Amberol managing director, Patience Atkinson, agrees: "Water conservation is an increasingly important factor and our system optimises its use saving both water and money."

The Aquafeed system is available in a wide range of sizes of barrier and half barrier boxes, wall and window boxes, hanging baskets, up-the-pole baskets, various styles of planters plus floral fountain and beehive planters.

For more information please contact:

sales@amberol.co.uk

Tel: 01773 830930