

From the Chairman...

Welcome to East Midlands in Bloom autumn / winter newsletter 2011, where I can report on another excellent year which consolidated the most inspiring community campaign in the region.

In terms of achievements by you, the entrants, we had the best ever year - everyone achieved at least Bronze for the very first time - so well done all of you!

We are always looking to improve how the campaign works for you, the entrants; to this end two notable changes are in place for 2012. First, the Bloom portfolio - please note that while the maximum allowed size remains unchanged, we recommend that it should actually be no more than 10 sides. Some communities find it a burden and cost to do - don't forget that it is not marked! Second, please check our website for revised details of the criteria for the School Garden competition, again aimed at making the activity more applicable to what you are doing.

Please encourage your local schools or other young person's groups involved in the painting and digital photography competition? We had a good year in 2011, but future bloomers are essential to the development of the campaign, so don't miss the opportunity of getting them involved.

Our national representatives did splendidly in 2011, with one Gold Award (Cleethorpes - who were also Category Winners) three Silver Gilt and one Silver awarded at St Andrews in September. Next year we hope that Market Bosworth, Northampton and two new representatives - Loughborough and Belper - will be celebrating success in Guernsey on October 6th. 2012 also sees EMiB having a 'Champion of Champions' invitee for the first time since 2008 - can Cleethorpes repeat their fabulous run of recent results? We do hope so!

To conclude, thanks to all our participants, judges, assessors and sponsors for their efforts in 2011 and wish you all another excellent year. As always I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in 2012. Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year!

Jeff Bates,

Chairman, East Midlands in Bloom

PLEASE NOTE:

All entry forms are downloadable from our website



2012 EMIB DIARY DATES

Fri 3rd Feb	Closing date for New Entrants Workshop reply slips and AGM nominations
Wed 15th Feb	EMiB New Entrants Workshop Newark Town Hall, Market Place, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 1DU
Wed 15th Feb	AGM Venue as above
Mon 30th April	Closing date for 'In Bloom', 'It's Your Neighbourhood' and EMiB Special Award entries
Fri 1st June	Closing date for EMiB Best School Garden Entries
Fri 8th June	Closing date for Children's Art Competition and Digital Photography Competition
Mon 2nd – Fri 13th July	EMiB Judging Period
Mon 2nd – Fri 27th July	EMiB It's Your Neighbourhood assessment period
Wed 12th Sept	EMiB Awards Presentation, Springfields Events Centre, Camelgate, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 6ET

2012 NEW ENTRANTS WORKSHOP

15th February, Newark Town Hall, Newark NG24 1DU

This event is specifically designed to explain to prospective new entrants why bloom is for you, and also how to get the process started on the right foot. Those who only joined in 2010 or 2011, and potential new Bloom groups, will benefit enormously from this very active event, which will be for the morning only and will include - weather permitting - a walk around areas of Newark where experienced EMiB judges and assessors will explain what they are looking for when they visit your community.

There is no obligation to enter the campaign by attending this event which is an excellent way to interact with other delegates, meet judges and gain advice. Please note that places will be limited to 100 due to the capacity of the venue.

The cost is £6 per person, to cover the cost of refreshments and a light lunch. To ensure your place/s, please return your completed reply slip (enclosed with this newsletter, or download a form from our website: www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk) by **Friday February 3rd** to EMiB Secretary Irene Bates* (see address below).

AGM

This will start after completion of the New Entrants Workshop at approximately 2.00 pm. Each Community that entered the EMiB Competition in 2011 is entitled to have *one* representative attend the AGM.

Any nominations for the executive committee must be received by Irene Bates not less than 14 days before the AGM (i.e. before Wednesday 1st February 2012). Please write with your nomination/s to:

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

Email: info@eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk
Tel: 01332 679598
www: www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk

Please also inform Irene Bates, if attending, by Friday 3rd February

Left:

Go to page 3 to see what has been happening and where!

East Midlands in Bloom 2011

We welcome new entrants Barton in Fabis, Milford, Lark Hill Village and The Meadows to the In Bloom competition this year. We are also very pleased to welcome the return of Holbeach, Nottingham and Syston.

Britain in Bloom

At national level we congratulate our East Midlands in Bloom entrants and are proud to recognise their following achievements in 2011:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| • Rosliston | Silver Gilt |
| • Donington | Silver |
| • Oadby & Wigston | Silver Gilt |
| • Northampton | Silver Gilt |
| • Cleethorpes | Gold and category winner |
| • Friends of Evington Park - | |
| IYN Certificate of Distinction (East Midlands) | |

They were presented with their well deserved awards by Rachel de Thame of BBC's 'Gardeners World' at the BiB Awards Presentation in St. Andrews, Fife on 26th September. We are happy to nominate the following to represent East Midlands in Bloom in 2012:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Market Bosworth | Large Village |
| • Belper | Large Town |
| • Loughborough | Small City |
| • Northampton | City |
| • and requested by the RHS: | |
| • Cleethorpes | Champion of Champions |

They go forward with our hopes for a great 2012 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

Please remember that you can also enter any of our four Special Awards: Frank Constable Award for best Front Garden; Best School Garden; Best Pub/Hotel garden and Best Retail/Commercial Premises.

Britain in Bloom Dates 2012

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 26 January | Finalist's Seminar (Norwich)/Finalist's Manual distributed |
| April | Britain in Bloom/It's Your Neighbourhood Launch Month - Wild about Wildflowers |
| 14-15 April | UK Wide local In Bloom & It's Your Neighbourhood Press Launch |
| 16-21 April | National Gardening Week |
| 2 July | Finalists' portfolios due |
| 30th July-10 August | BIB judging fortnight |
| 6 October | Britain in Bloom Awards (St Peter Port, Guernsey) |
| 7 October | Judges Surgeries (St Peter Port, Guernsey) |
| November | RHS Dig Together |
| 21-22 November | Regions & Nations Meeting and Britain in Bloom Summit (involving Regions, Nations, DSG and UK Finals Judges) |
| 31 January 2013 | Finalists' Seminar |

Notable themes for 2012

- The Queen's Diamond Jubilee
- Olympics
- Bicentenary of the birth of Charles Dickens
- Centenary of the Titanic launch and demise
- (2014) Anniversary of first Britain in Bloom campaign

Goodbye and thank you!

We say a big thank you and farewell to Martin Latimer, who has decided to retire after serving as a Judge, Committee Member (including Management Committee) and Vice Chairman for very many years. We all wish him the very best in the future.

We must also pay an enormous thank you to the Derbyshire Building Society, who have been the main Sponsor of EMiB for more than 15 years. Having now fully merged into Nationwide they are substantially rethinking their local sponsorships, and unfortunately we no longer meet their criteria. So a fond farewell after all their invaluable support, without which we could not have grown the campaign.

Sponsors

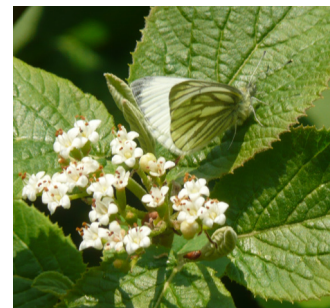
We would like to thank all our sponsors for their support in 2011, particularly the Derbyshire Building Society, Amberol, Plantscape, The Art Department, Derby College, geViews, DART Training, Naylors Bulbs, Barcham Trees and Vital Earth. Thanks also to N E Lincs County Council and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council as well as Nottingham City Council for their support.

We encourage all our young budding artists to enter our Children's Art Competition and Digital Photography Competition in 2012.



Left: 'Winter' by Jon Coldwell (aged 9)

Below: winning photo by Emily Pykett (aged 8)



BRITAIN IN BLOOM

Wild about Wildflowers launch event

In the autumn issue of the RHS Growing Communities magazine which most entrants get, you will have noticed that the Britain in Bloom launch event is to be held throughout April 2012 with the focal point being 14-15th April. To add impact to your campaign you have the opportunity to register to get free wildflower seeds from the RHS. To qualify you will need to have been an EMiB Bloom or IYN entrant in 2011 or if you are a new/returning entrant for 2012 please register with EMiB first, to be eligible for the seeds.

This offer is part of a nationwide 'in Bloom' celebration to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and you will need to download an application form which can be found on:

<http://www.rhs.org.uk/Gardening/Community-gardening/Britain-in-Bloom/2012-Britain-in-Bloom-launch>

Please do this well before the closing date of March 12th, as this is already proving to be a very popular offer. Here you will also find a support pack for your group, as well as press release and poster templates to support you in your campaign. The seeds will be sent out in the week commencing 26th March.

For new funding ideas and tree packs see page 9

Growing Respect in The Meadows

The Meadows has been an important part of the citywide Nottingham in Bloom campaign for many years. It all started as these things often do, with a few local residents chatting with neighbours on the terrace streets. There is no record of who first said, "Wouldn't it be nice if...." But someone did and a couple of the terraces in the Old Meadows started to put some effort into planting hanging baskets and planters. The local council helped with this process and soon it became a part of Meadows life. Numerous streets and groups in the area enter the It's Your Neighbourhood awards each year and are now valued ambassadors for the neighbourhood campaign across the city.

In 2010, these neighbourhoods were approached by the Nottingham in Bloom team to see if they would be interested in working together to enter the Urban Community competition for the first time on behalf of the whole of the Meadows.

The process of planning the East Midlands in Bloom entry began in January with the organisation of a public meeting to put forward the idea of entering East Midlands in Bloom on behalf of the whole Meadows area. The event was well attended by those who have been involved with the It's Your Neighbourhood entries in previous years. It was unanimously agreed that this would be an excellent way of celebrating the momentum of the Meadows' Blooming achievements but also of maintaining the momentum of its Blooming ambition.

Over the course of the year there were several planning meetings to help make sure that everything was ready for

the judges and that the maximum number of people were involved in the process.

However, most of the work in preparing for the event was practical, with individuals and groups across the Meadows organising work to improve the look of the area and to share knowledge of horticultural techniques. This has involved schools, tenants and residents associations, Nottingham City Council, Nottingham City Homes, as well as untold numbers of individuals who have just concentrated on their patch.

As a community development exercise it has been a great success giving various groups the opportunity to focus on real improvements to their area and forging stronger links within the community in the process.

It has of course meant a lot more work and a great deal of support from the local authority and other agencies to ensure that the area looked its very best for judging day, but the commitment from all involved was total and the results speak for themselves.

I would say to any group thinking of putting forward an entry to view it as a great opportunity for people to focus on an achievable goal and get stuck in. The benefits are considerable and ultimately you can't lose.

**Guy Jones, Community Engagement Worker,
The Meadows Partnership Trust**

Photo by Gary Hope



Britain in Bloom Community Champion

Alan Fletcher is the Parks and Open Spaces Manager at North East Lincolnshire Council, a position that he is very passionate about, working with various local "In Bloom" groups, communities and neighbourhoods across the borough. He has seen and been involved with many changes within the horticultural industry over the past 43 years. Here he reflects on the journey and RHS Community Champion Award he received at the "Fairmont" St Andrew's, Scotland on the 25th September 2011.

After leaving school at 15 I was fortunate to be offered an apprenticeship with a local nursery, Pennell & Sons of Lincoln, reputed for breeding, and producing Clematis. My tutor Mr Walter Pennell the owner of the Lincolnshire family business with shops and nurseries county wide. I attended both Riseholme and Caythorpe Horticultural Colleges gaining my City and Guilds qualifications, a time at which my horticultural foundations were established.

After leaving Pennell's I went to work for another locally owned family nursery, Bryan and Linda, Goodey's, Southfield Nurseries at Holton Le Clay. The Cacti specialist prior to them relocating to their present site at Bourne. It was from there I went to work for a local authority, as a Nurseryman, joining Cleethorpes Borough Council's Parks Department in 1976 based at Haverstoe Park Cleethorpes. Back then a new "Clear span" nursery unit had been erected situated close to the seafront, sadly it no longer exists. All of the annual bedding requirements, pot plants for indoor floral displays and many shrubs were produced at the site for local landscaping schemes. More changes were to come after the demise of (C.C.T) Compulsory Competitive Tendering and boundary changes and restructures during which I had many changes to my job title from Contract Manager, Grounds Maintenance Manager, and Localities Manager that I can remember. Common sense finally prevailed when I was appointed to the post of Parks and Open Spaces Manager, the post I currently hold within North East Lincolnshire Council. A post I have been very proud to hold.

From the early days of being involved with the East Midlands "In Bloom" having cut our teeth with Yorkshire "In Bloom" the journey can only be described as a very exciting roller coaster ride. The Cleethorpes "In Bloom" committee (Team Cleethorpes) of which I am a founder member have gone from strength to strength, this year gaining a gold award in the Coastal category over 12k population. Also within North East Lincolnshire, both Grimsby and Immingham received Silver Gilt awards this year which we feel is a fantastic achievement, both having sights on gold within 2012.

We then had to wait a fortnight before we travelled north to St Andrew's in Scotland, to find out the result of our entry in the R.H.S Britain in Bloom. You can imagine our delight when Chairman Bob Callison and Vice Chairman Jeff Blanchard went to the stage "Cleethorpes" a R.H.S. Gold award and category winner, a truly fantastic result.

It was at that point that I could not believe 2011 could get any better than that, how wrong I was proved to be as the night progressed. The first half of the presentations drew to a close whilst an amazing dinner was served at the "Fairmont" a beautiful hotel overlooking the golf course and St Andrew's Bay, a truly 5 star facility. The professionalism of the members of staff, the quality of the food and the comfort provided within was a wonderful experience alone, one day I hope to return.

The second half of the proceedings commenced with the Cleethorpes contingency. Now relaxed, comfortably seated and feeling very proud of their achievement. This my first visit to Fife a wonderful historical part of Scotland was to turn out to be a visit that I would remember for the rest of my life.

From the stage microphone came some familiar facts followed by my name, I had been called to the stage to receive a Community Champion award. Words cannot describe the feeling whilst walking to collect that prestigious Royal Horticultural Society Award from Rachel De Thame, I just wish I could have a replay, it felt like a dream.

Since returning home, now having had time to reflect on my award, the time I have spent with "In Bloom" groups and the friendships I have formed I realise what horticulture has brought to my life. The enthusiasm and commitment of "Team Cleethorpes" the involvement and fantastic work carried out by the local communities and neighbourhoods here in North East Lincolnshire has been tremendous. The business support, the individual support and that of North East Lincolnshire Council all have attributed to the success story. It has been a wonderful journey, a journey that could be described as exciting, enjoyable, exhilarating and sometimes exhausting but I would not have wanted it any other way. We have stopped only briefly to refuel, tomorrow the journey continues, who knows what delights 2012 will bring.

Alan Fletcher
Parks & Open Spaces Manager,
North East Lincolnshire Council

Below: Alan Fletcher and some of his work from this year



Milford and it's Silver Award 2011

"Milford does not require strangers to judge its appearance! We are proud of it as it is, nestling where the wooded river valley opens out to allow the Derwent a more leisurely approach to the city of Derby. Reminders of our industrial heritage dominate the village, and there are venerable cottages with well-tended gardens. What could be gained from a stranger's opinion?"

Such was the view of the Milford resident. Yet a few years ago several of them joined together to form Blooming Milford, with the express purpose of eradicating the few blots on the village landscape. There was room for improvement.

And so it began. There was the need to determine who owned which parcels of land, and the limits of what could and couldn't be done upon them. There were links to strengthen with Belper Town Council and Amber Valley Borough Council, both of which became a valuable source of advice and assistance. The team toured the village, handing "Thank-you" certificates to the households with attractive front gardens. Then there was a Blooming Milford plant stall at the village's annual May Fair, which meant that suddenly there was money with which to realise some of the team's ambitions.

And so it grew. The money was converted to daffodil bulbs. A site was chosen beside the busy A6, and the team welcomed the village schoolchildren's help in the planting. Belper News, the local newspaper, covered the event, since when the paper has since regularly given space to the team's ups and downs. Come the following spring, there was a blaze of yellow flowers for all to enjoy: Blooming Milford was 'news', and the team realised how their efforts could not only improve the village, but have a positive impact on so many people, locals and passing strangers alike.

And all this before anyone seriously mentioned "East Midlands in Bloom"!

There was a reluctance to enter. The team works to have Milford "looking good" all year, not just for a judging day each June. Most of its members have day jobs and other commitments. Would it be worth it? Would there be time?

With this hurdle overcome, the team shared out the following tasks.

1. Produce a portfolio. Examine those of winning villages. Include photos of the team's work throughout the year. Allow plenty of time!
2. Carefully select the judging route. Walk it, time it, involve ex-judges if possible! Keep its residents informed. Do a dry run, with an independent observer, just before judgement day.
3. Study the minutiae of judging criteria. Identify the route's strengths and weaknesses.
4. Involve the village's businesses and community groups wherever possible.
5. Everything else! Keep the Councils informed and involved. Have a litter plan, and what about the weeds? And so much more, including.....
6. When the judge's have finished the route and they're offered refreshment, ensure that the fresh-baked scones are topped by the finest strawberries!

So, to conclude, what of Blooming Milford, proud possessors of a Silver Award, a team that expected 'Bronze' at best? They're exhausted, but they've learnt a lot, not least how an already splendid village might be even more so!

John Weaver, Blooming Milford

Photo montage by Ashley Franklin



Flinders Founders -

A voluntary Youth Group from the village of Donington, Lincolnshire



Flinders Founders Teen Park

Started in 2006, Flinders Founders play a big part in the local community. Formed with the ambition to make Donington a better place for the youth, we had our work cut out due to lack of facilities. We began as a group of 11 to 19 year olds but as members have reached 19 some have stayed on so we do not lose their experience. We meet monthly to discuss ways in which we can improve Donington. Usually our meetings' agenda includes fundraising events, our Teen Park and village activities. We rely solely on grants and our own fundraising. We organise many events throughout the year to raise essential funds; for example we organise a Halloween party, a Christmas party and our very own Party in the Park, which is our most successful fundraiser. We also join in village events such as Flower Festival, Donington in Bloom, Christmas Market and Fun Day in the Park.

In our meetings we discuss issues with our Teen Park. We created this to make Donington a better place for young people. From the beginning we asked the youth what they would like to see in Donington and through this consultation we discovered that they wanted an area they can call theirs. We worked with the young people and came up with the idea of a Teen Park in Donington consisting of a shelter, seating area, skate ramps and BMX track. So this is what we planned. We applied for and received a grant for £79,000 to help make this plan on paper a reality. It opened in 2008. We continue to meet as a group to see what more can be done to develop the Teen Park. There have been new skate ramps added; we have extended the BMX track; we have put in more seating and bins and our last project was to improve the overall look of the Teen Park especially the frontage. We have built new fencing, and a bridge, made a pathway to the skate area and created a ditch garden which all gives a warm welcome to the Park. We still continue to develop the park by asking the Youth of Donington what more can be placed in the park. Our next project will hopefully see a piece of equipment called A Bowl which our users are desperate for. It is securing the money from grants which is proving difficult but we will not give up. Because of the Teen Park and our involvement in village

life, we have received much recognition for our hard work and commitment in making sure Donington is a better place for the Youth. So we were very pleased to be entered for the fourth time into the Its Your Neighbourhood Award. Previously we have been recognised for all our effort and achievements. This year we received Outstanding due to the work we had done for our frontage and also the flowering of our ditch which last year was just a hole. To top this off Flinders Founders also received DART Most Inspiring Entry. This is a massive achievement for us and we are all so proud of this. This award has shown that all our dedication and hard work pays off and it gives us the motivation to continue to provide this service to the community of Donington. We would like to say a big thank you to East Midlands in Bloom for presenting us with this award and we will continue with all we do for our community.

Amy Bristow

Below: Joe, Ryan and Lucas are proud to receive their DART Most Inspiring Entry trophy and IYN Outstanding Achievement certificate from Alistair Fraser



Friends of Evington Village Green

The Friends of Evington Village Green began in 2006 with a campaign to provide better play equipment on the local Village Green - an area of land with a few swings and then gaps where previous equipment had been taken away. The idea was to improve the area and cut down on anti-social behaviour. Alongside this project a circular 9' bed was developed into a mixed border and planted up. The group have maintained this bed continuously. They were particularly grateful to Biffawards and Community Champions for starting things off and trusting a new group.

We were also lucky to be supported by the Parks Manager from Leicester City Council, Park Services (Area 3) and built up partnerships with the Friends of Evington Park to work together on the next project – a new herbaceous and sensory garden in Evington Park.

We have entered the East Midlands in Bloom Neighbourhood awards in 2009, 2010 and 2011 and on each occasion we have received Outstanding awards. This year we also received a special distinction award, with full marks for community involvement.

Over the three years our 'Friends of' group has obtained extra funding for new projects – we have worked on surveys, set up various working groups including a new group to develop the Burnaby Gardens and a new Orchard development group. We have obtained funding in partnership with Leicester City Council for outdoor gym equipment, garden tools and a shed, a fruit garden and for funding for Cycling and Scooting in 3 Leicester Parks. We have organised an 'It's Your Neighbourhood' Litter picking sessions and made contact with schools. In spite of all these 'extra' projects, the main passion for the group continues to be gardening.



Now, following advice from East Midlands in Bloom judges, the group have decided to enter the next category, and intend to call themselves 'Evington in Bloom'.

Starting something new is always a bit daunting and wouldn't have been possible without Penny Brown, Leicester 'In Bloom' co-ordinator. I took the plunge and agreed to be the Evington co-ordinator and started off by working with Penny to design the route for the judges. The next stage was to contact lots and lots of local people. This has involved endless e-mails, telephone calls and meetings, and publicity in our local community newspaper the Evington Echo. Being involved with this paper has given me a headstart because I already know a lot of groups and individuals in the area. The enthusiasm of our local councillors has kept us going and they have initiated and supported open meetings to discuss the project with everyone. We have also received help from Simon Lucas from Oadby and Wigston in Bloom. Oadby and Wigston got a gold award in the City category for the 'In Bloom' competition – what useful neighbours.

Some of the ways we have started seem a bit topsy turvey, because we still need to establish the decision making group and set up regular meetings, as not everyone on the 'Friends of' committee are involved in Evington in Bloom. We did need to have the 'membership' meetings first.

We would like to thank East Midlands in Bloom for organising such a good campaign that does encourage local people to make a difference.

Helen Pettman, Friends of Evington



Awards Presentation

Around 250 delegates attended the EMiB Awards Presentation at the Parklands Leisure Centre in Oadby, Leicester on 14th September 2011. We were delighted to have the Lady Mayor and consort present as well as Lucy Reid, Programme Co-ordinator of Events and Operations at the RHS. The Pride of the Borough, Oadby & Wigston group pulled out all the stops to be as helpful and inviting as possible with their colourful sunflower pennants welcoming us in. The tables were decorated with lovely flowers and all our guests enjoyed a splendid hot meal which was followed by a tour of the Leicester Botanic Gardens and Brocks Hill Country Park. Many thanks go out to the whole team for their support!



Twenty years in bloom

December 1991 and a letter drops through the door promoting the East Midlands in Bloom competition.

After reading all the literature accompanying the letter I filled in the application form and returned it straight away. Now what was going to be the next step? Really I didn't have a clue; after much persuasion a number of green fingered residents gathered for a meeting at the local pub. After outlining a number of ambitions and getting responses such as what about vandals, this not a pretty place and we don't stand a chance of winning, it was decided to give things ago.

Not anticipating any outcome Rosliston in Bloom was born.

Over the following months a plan began to take shape and before we knew it judging time was upon us and duly a young Eileen Swan arrived for the judging tour, and that was that until the morning of August 1st when I received a phone call from the local paper asking how the village felt on winning our category in the East Midlands In Bloom. 'That was the first I had heard about it', explaining on the phone; ***the morning post not yet arrived!***

The jungle telegraph went into overdrive everyone being over the moon, not being able to believe we had managed to come first not us not Rosliston we never won anything our village was always the poor relation in the area.

The following year the village entered again, adding a number of improvements to the previous year's entry it was already in the bag. That year our judge was a young Jeff Bates, a pleasant chap who kept waxing lyrical about a rambling rose he had seen in the neighbouring and rival village of Lullington; anyway that year we runners up so Jeff wasn't our favourite person at the time.

From then on we paid more attention to detail; always thinking outside the box resulted in a number of wins and it wasn't long before Rosliston became known as the ***'Village of Flowers'***. After a number of years all things change however and with rumblings of internal politics Rosliston dropped out of the competition.

In the intervening time before our eventual return to the competition, Rosliston still bloomed and ideas changed, the use of natural materials mainly logs and tree roots became part of our designs; with many people thinking we had lost the plot completely when an enormous tree root appeared on one of the beds and weeks were spent cleaning it!

Upon return to the East Midlands in Bloom we soon realised the competition had changed dramatically and the top slot would not be a walkover. With the internal politics and bickering of previous years behind us, we were more than happy with the runners up position. Taking part is what really mattered as it gave the village a focus to improve our surroundings for the benefit of everyone. The decision was made to gradually increase our points score and aim for a gold medal whether it be first position or not. Although the competition now covered many criteria our first priority was to bloom and horticultural excellence; that's what our residents want to see along with the many tourists now visiting the village!

Yes we have managed the elusive gold three times now, along with one silver and two silver gilts in the national competition.

Every year we form a basic plan and discuss what plants

we will need but somehow we never seem to stick with it, when planting time arrives the team are out with their trowels and that is when things start to change.

The whole mystery of gardening is that plants never always perform how you think they should so the easiest way is to go with the flow and adapt.

Public planting always takes longer than anticipated simply everyone passing by wants to talk giving encouragement, tips and even asking advice, but somehow they never have a trowel in their pocket or if they had time they would love to lend a hand; My motto is:

'If you want something doing always ask a busy person'.

1991/92 seems like yesterday then I turned round and it's 2011/12!

Paul Marbrow Rosliston in Bloom



Blooming at St Crispin Retirement Village Duston, Northampton

I have just come indoors from the greenhouse where I have been for most of the day - at the moment it is full of geraniums we have brought in from the gardens - there are approximately 300 plants and 300 cuttings - I just hope they are still with us in the Spring! The greenhouse has been full of winter/spring bedding and gradually I have managed to get them into the beds together with daffodils, fritillaries, crocus, primrose, and tulips - the tulips are !Olympic Flame! Ready for our celebrations next year.

Needless to say it has been a busy summer firstly with entering EMiB and winning silver and the judges award also the neighborhood award Level 5. The gardens were entered in the Extracare garden in bloom yearly event and we won 7 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze so I feel that the work that has been done here at St Crispin's by our small team of dedicated workers has been rewarded. I was invited to the Mayors Parlour on Monday as a thank you for the points we earned here at the village as they went toward Northampton Town achieving a Gold in the EMIB event.

Back to the gardens again - we have been at the Village for five years now and the old style planting we inherited from the garden planners (mainly uninteresting shrubs)



have gradually been replaced with more interesting planting - there is still a lot to do here and taking into account the age of the residents I would love to get some more automatic watering systems in place but with a limited budget we are still struggling in that direction.

The Residents here range in age from 70 to 90 plus and those that are still able to garden have so much knowledge to impart and it is a joy to see their efforts come into bloom and the smile of satisfaction on their faces. I started my gardening career when I was 9 years old and an evacuee. I was fostered by an elderly lady who lived alone and of course at the time everyone was growing vegetables - I learned a lot from this lovely lady and it has stayed with me. Over the years many things have taken over my time, bringing up a family of five and ten grandchildren (now 2 great grandchildren) but the garden has always been my hobby.

Now that the winter is creeping up on us all and the nights are darker its back to planning for next year so out come the seed catalogues and magazines and start planning for next year. Here's to 2012 and continued health for us all - carry on blooming at St Crispin!

**Beryl Harper, Garden Captain
St Crispin Retirement Village**



BIG LOTTERY FUND have just launched a new initiative called Communities Living Sustainably and you can find details here: http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_communities_living_sustainably?tab=1®ioncode=-uk

This is a geographically targeted programme which will bring whole communities together to tackle climate change. The aim is to bring all sections of the community together - its residents, businesses, public bodies such as schools, local authorities, PCTs etc. - to develop and deliver integrated local plans which deal with both mitigation activities (reducing energy) and adaptation activities (tackling fuel/food/water poverty; coping better with severe weather events).

Big Lottery have up to £10m available to fund up to 10 communities in England. There will be a development phase during which £10K will be provided for up to 30 communities to develop their delivery plans before Big Lottery make the final decisions on the 10.

If you know of any communities/projects you think might be interested in applying, please let them know as well.

The contact for any questions you may have is:

Elaine Warner, Senior Policy Adviser, England Big Lottery Fund. Tel: 0207 211 3746

THE BIG TREE PLANT

The Big Tree Plant recognises the importance and benefits of urban tree planting for community and other non-government organisations in areas where people live and work.

Barcham Trees support The Big Tree Plant and all tree planting. In addition to providing advice, help and support for your tree project, they will assist with your Bloom group and its application for this project.

For full details of how Barcham can help (including details of matched funding, advice, support and onsite planting training) please contact Ellen Carvey at Barcham Trees for a copy of Barcham' pack, in support of The Big Tree Plant."

Ellen Carvey, Sales Executive, Barcham Trees

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Mob: 07738 457 705

www.barcham.co.uk

Amberol's service 'second to none' says the city of Nottingham

A commitment to the environment

Nottingham City Council is firmly committed to maintaining floral displays within the city as much as budget allows. Nottingham also has a proud history of success in Britain in Bloom, having won the East Midlands in Bloom title 18 times and Britain in Bloom 4 times, achieving Britain in Bloom Champion of Champions in 2008.

With such a strong commitment to maintaining the communal environment, the department need to use products that are cost effective and robust. Nottingham City Council has a long history of working with Amberol. They use a range of Amberol's products, including self watering planters, barrier baskets, hanging baskets, beehive planters

and three tier pagoda planters. "Our business relationship with Amberol has flourished over many years," comments Glenn Springthorpe, Nursery Manager. "We use Amberol's products to enhance the environment with floral displays, both within the city centre and in the city's neighbourhoods."

Effective, practical and aesthetically pleasing

Amberol products feature heavily on the Britain in Bloom route, providing a backdrop for the council to showcase its horticultural excellence. "Amberol's containers and planters are effective and practical, as well as being aesthetically pleasing," comments Glenn. "They are very durable; we have had some units many years and they are still serviceable."

Glenn and the team feel that using Amberol's self watering products is a cost effective move. "The containers help to save time and money which would otherwise be spent watering the displays. The water reservoirs are essential in ensuring that we can maintain a high quality of floral displays in spite of extreme temperatures. They also save

on water consumption when compared to normal hanging baskets."

The benefits of good floral displays in urban areas are multitude, as Glenn explains. "As well as helping the city to gain prestige through competitions such as Britain in Bloom, floral displays also bring a 'feel good factor' to the city, creating an attractive, pleasing environment which people want to visit - and return to. We feel they are a contributory factor in boosting tourism and helping to support our retail offer."

Positive feedback

The council also regularly receive positive feedback from residents, demonstrating the pride and pleasure that people get

from the displays. One such local resident, Patricia Clements says "Just wanted to say how much the plant baskets along the railings at Basford Crossings have affected the feel of the area in a very positive way this summer. I am pleased to see that they have remained intact over the period and I wonder if anti-social incidents have reduced as a result of it looking as if someone has cared for the environment? Thank you very much for the pleasure they have given me

"Amberol offer excellent customer service; they are a very friendly and efficient company who strive to build personal relationships with their customers and are always prepared to go the extra mile," comments Glenn.

To find out more about how Amberol's products can help you, visit the website at

www.amberol.co.uk

or call 01773 830 930

or email info@amberol.co.uk



SPONSORSHIP 2012

East Midlands in Bloom still has a few categories and special awards that can be sponsored.

We welcome new enquiries. Please contact info@eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk if you are interested.